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Unmapping Social Space: The Toronto Frontrunners, Lefebvre and Geographies of Resistance

by

Cathy van Ingen ©

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Abstract

This study is an ethnographic inquiry focused on the production of (social) space within the Frontrunners, a running club for gay and lesbian athletes in Toronto's "gay village". Informed by the work of Henri Lefebvre, this project explores geographies of resistance and the significance of the spaces through which marginalized identities are articulated and lived. This exploration foregrounds both theoretical and empirical work drawing on interviews with members of the Frontrunners, as well as numerous other sources, to disrupt boundaries, trouble received notions of resistance and highlight the struggles, ambivalences, pleasures, contradictions and erasures that exist in "safe places" for sexual minorities. In other words, this project considers spatializations that reflect the mundane, everyday, commonplace ways that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people "fashion a spatial presence and practice outside the norms of prevailing (enforced) social spatializations" (Shields 1999:164).

Using Lefebvre's dialectical approach I critically examine the meaning and significance of a social space created by sexual dissidents and shaped by the interplay of domination and resistance. Drawing on narrative accounts of twelve Frontrunners, I explore the geography of social relations within the 'counterspace' of the running club to trace out multiple forms of in/exclusion along lines of race, gender, and social class in addition to sexuality. I also take up Lefebvre's concept of abstract space to examine the ways in which sexuality produces space through capitalist social relations. In order to create a text that captures the way in which multiple stories and experiences simultaneously occur

within social space I employ a number of different writing strategies. Using postmodern textual practices I have attempted to turn the text into a display and interaction among contradictory perspectives bringing the reader into the analysis via a disperse impulse which fragments univocal authority.

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Chapter 1

Unpacking and Unmapping

> *'Explore me,' you said and I collected my ropes, flasks and maps, expecting to be back home soon. I dropped into the mass of you and I cannot find my way out.*
>
> From Jeanette Winterson (1993) Written On The Body

In Jeanette Winterson's Written On The Body, the unnamed narrator discovers that it is not easy to find a way out of love, as loving someone creates endless changes. Throughout the novel, Winterson plays with conventional narrative lines as boundaries, parameters, definitions, and explanations change in the characters' lives. By lining language with flesh and writing through the body's contours and boundaries, Winterson suspends the concreteness and specificity of the body, opening its inscribed surfaces and disciplined desires for exploration. By opening this dissertation with the above passage, I want to begin to navigate through spaces which, like the body, must also be rescued from topographical understanding. Hence the text of this dissertation shifts and moves through a multiplicity of layers that unfold and offer multiple ways of thinking about space and bodies. This chapter is intended as a guide, unpacking and loosely (un)mapping the theoretical coordinates and open-ended itineraries pursued in this research project.

This study is an ethnographic inquiry focused on the different experiences and mediations of social space within the Frontrunners, a running club for gay and lesbian athletes in Toronto's 'gay village'[1]. My interest is in the body's capacity for action and resistance, and the immediate relationship between the body and space. This work is heavily informed by Henri Lefebvre, French philosopher, geographer and social theorist, who examines space as a *product* of the body. In other words, Lefebvre argues that space and bodies are not indifferent to each other but that specific spaces are produced and maintained by bodies through spatial practice. However, a caveat must be entered from the start. Social space is not some 'place' you can drop into and than easily find your way out off. Space cannot be dissolved into something deceptively clear and unchanging; rather, the social space of the Frontrunners Running Club has a continuous flow into which one can only wade.

---

[1] For the purposes of this study the 'gay village' which is the Church-Wellesley area encompasses the space between Bloor Street and Gerrard Street from Yonge Street to Sherbourne Street. These are the parameters that are popularly understood as comprising the gay village. These streets are also the 'borders' outlined in Mark Lehman's (1994) study on the development of the Gay Community within the Church-Wellesley area.

Unpacking The Project

Broadly speaking, this ethnographic study focuses on the (social) production of (social) space within the Frontrunners Running Club that operates out of the gay village in Toronto. More specifically, the study examines the complex relationship between power, resistance, space and social identities. This project explores geographies of resistance and the significance of the spaces through which marginalized identities are articulated and lived. This exploration foregrounds both theoretical and empirical work drawing on interviews with members of the Frontrunners, as well as numerous other sources, to disrupt boundaries, trouble received notions of resistance and highlight the struggles, ambivalences, pleasures, contradictions and erasures that exist in "safe places" for sexual minorities.

As has been pointed out to me at several conferences, resistance is a term that raises red flags of caution. Indeed, resistance is a vacuous term that has been tied to romanticism, naïve humanist rhetoric, and is largely limited to grand scale political movements. This project seeks to move past such orthodox and static models of knowing to consider spatializations that reflect the mundane, everyday, commonplace ways that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people “fashion a spatial presence and practice outside the norms of prevailing (enforced) social spatialization” (Shields 1999:164). I shall not attempt to account for all the contributions of a spatial imagination here. But I think it is important to briefly register the need for and distinct uses of understandings of resistance and space. Spatializing resistance opens up a dialogue between cultural politics and geography (Keith & Pile 1993); erodes the comforting separation between theory and everyday life (Lefebvre 1991, Gardiner 2000); works against what Michele Barrett (1999) calls the “sweeping anti-humanism” of theoretical work that eliminates the possibility of political agency; and in keeping with the ‘cultural turn’ in social theory, geographies of resistance explore subjectivity and identity, where sexuality, gender, race and social class are seen as equally important (Peake 1993). Edward Soja argues that "[a]ll social relations become real and concrete, a part of our lived social existence, only when they are spatially "inscribed" - that is, concretely represented - in the social production of social space" (1996:46). Understanding that resistance must be spatially inscribed as part of our lived social existence opens up for examination the spatial strategies through which sexual minorities contest their domination and the geographies of resistance to which those strategies point.

Unmapping the Beginnings

This study has many beginnings, some of which I trace out here. My interest in the Frontrunners grew out of a series of events that began with a move from Edmonton, Alberta to Toronto, Ontario. While living in Toronto I signed up to play basketball in a league called Rainbow Hoops. Playing basketball in this league was unlike any other experience I had in sport. The league was formed as a "cooperative" recreational league open to players of any ability and guaranteed equal playing time for each player. The only stipulation was that players had to be lesbian or lesbian-positive. The gym was filled with bodies who, for the most part, either had not been involved in team sport before and felt 'out of place' in athletic settings or athletes who had played on competitive sport teams but were 'out of place' as lesbians in heteronormative sport environments. My interest in the league and the players became the focus of a paper I wrote for a graduate class. While conducting interviews with several players and the league founders, I began to get a sense of just how important it is for sexual minorities to have spaces of their own. For some, the league was the one space where they could openly socialize with other lesbians; others were looking for a noncompetitive environment where they felt 'safe' playing sport; some wanted the opportunity to make new friends, lovers and partners; and all were interested in being somewhere that they felt comfortable. During one of my interviews, I was particularly struck by a comment made by one woman, a physical education teacher from a small town, who each Saturday drove two hours to play in the Rainbow Hoops league. As she put it, she simply "needed some gay air".

Having access to queer[2] space such as the Rainbow Hoops league and the gay ghetto played an integral part in my becoming aware of the politics of space. During the same year (1997) that I was living in Toronto, Delwin Vriend, a gay man who had lost his teaching job at an Edmonton Christian College, was fighting the province over the exclusion of gays from its human rights code. Vriend vs. Alberta was a high profile case, which ended up in front of the Supreme Court of Canada. The case, which Vriend eventually won, legally protected sexual minorities from discrimination in Alberta. One of the things the case reinforced for me was how significant the "where" of our lives is - that the location of everyday life shapes our experiences and (sexual) identities in fundamental ways. These moments and experiences began to layer and furthered my interest in the geography of social relations. But perhaps the capping event, in initiating this project, was reading Patricia Nell Warren's (1974) novel, The Front Runner. The popular novel explores the erotic possibilities between an athlete and coach and the pleasures and dangers of being 'out' in competitive sport. Reading the novel, along with my own experiences in the gay village, solidified my interest in tracing what Soja and Hooper (1993) call the "spaces that difference makes".

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[2] The term 'queer' is a contested one and has multiple meanings. In this instance, I am using 'queer' to strategically avoid the exclusionist and essentialist identity categories of 'lesbian' or 'bisexual'. Throughout this project, the term 'queer' will be used in two distinct ways – either as an umbrella term for

As stated earlier in this chapter, this project explores the struggle for control over the social production of space. I examine how relations of power and resistance are inscribed into what Soja calls "the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideology" (1989:6). Tracing the relationship between geographies of oppression and geographies of resistance requires that you put down your ropes, flasks and maps. Boundaries, parameters, definitions and explanations of what kind of spaces are opened up in a running club for sexual dissidents will overlap, shift and change. Within sections of this dissertation the text is frequently side-tracked to make room for these simultaneous mappings. I am aware of the paradoxes

---

culturally marginalized sexual self-identifications or to describe a theoretical model. I take up aspects of queer theory later in this project.

and limitations of writing a dissertation that could go "all over the place" yet which is also bound by academic and disciplinary boundaries, supervisory committees, and my own desires to see this work accepted within "core" journals. But just as there is not a sequential flow to the postmodern urban geography[3] of the Frontrunners running club, there is not one method for writing this text. At the same time that I adhere to conventional textual strategies to set up the first two chapters of this project, I move outside of linear writing practices in chapters 3, 4 and 5 in order to displace what Soja calls "the familiar modalities of time, to shake up the normal flow of the linear text to allow other, more 'lateral' connections to be made" (1989:1). These lateral connections, as Soja (1989) goes on to explain, are required in order to begin interpreting postmodern geographies and to reveal the ways in which the geography of simultaneous relations and meanings are tied together within spatial logic. As Laurel Richardson (2000) argues in "New Writing Practices in Qualitative Research" what is at stake in ethnographic projects is not "'getting it right,' only 'getting it' differently contoured and nuanced" (pg.10). The more empirically-based spatializations of chapters 3, 4 and 5 reflect a dialectical approach investigating the tenuous yet substantial spaces created and accessed by people whose sexualities have been marginalized. The text in these chapters attempts to get it differently and several textual moves are used to make space for interview transcripts, specific historical, material and cultural contexts and the interstices of public places that need to be read in conjunction with each other.

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[3] Postmodern geographies assert the respatialization of social theory and rely on "post" knowledges for theoretical contributions that expand understandings of space. Similarly, this project meshes geography with postmodern social analysis to displace technical and mathematized versions of geographical description, which enables a radical rethinking of space. My use of 'postmodern' geographies and spatial approaches is taken up in more detail in chapters 2 & 3. But to provide some initial clarification, postmodern approaches to geography and *social space* in particular, refer to spaces that (like bodies) are produced and re-created in numerous ways. Social spaces, for example, are not fixed, and as such are particularly resistant to conventional description, are limitless, always in motion and therefore cannot be fully described.

Entering That Space: The International Front Runners

> As bell hooks has said: Marginality is the space of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there.
>
> (cited in Soja and Hooper 1993:200)

> …Each club is a *place* to run for fun or fitness, a *place* to compete or not compete, a *place* to brunch, a *place* to look for a lover, a *safe place* to meet and be with spirited gays and lesbians of wide diversity and a *place* to find or be oneself.[4]
>
> (Bud Budlong, 1996 [emphasis added])

The International Front Runners (IFR) is an affiliation of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered (glbt) running/walking clubs that operate within many urban centres throughout the world. The first Front Runners club began in San Francisco in 1974, when the Lavender Joggers renamed their club after Patricia Nell Warren's novel The Front Runner[5]. In the following passage, one of the original members of the San

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[4] Bud Budlong is one of the original members of the first Front Runners club. This quote comes from the International Front Runner's Web Page: www.frontrunners.org.

[5] Warren's novel is significant in that it was the first mass-marketed gay novel with openly gay and lesbian characters that was carried by a mainstream publisher (Warren 2000). The Front Runner was also one of the first gay love stories that made *The New York Times* bestseller list (Warren 2001). Twenty years after its release, The Front Runner continues to be reprinted, has sold an estimated 10 million copies worldwide and has been translated into eight languages making it one of the most popular gay novels of all time (Garfield 1996). It is fitting that the International Front Runners have maintained a link to Patricia Nell Warren as she is an important figure both women's and gay and lesbian sport. The term 'frontrunner' is used to describe a runner who leads the pack and chooses the pace, it is someone who risks being reeled in at the end of the race if they expend to much energy running alone in front. Essentially, a front-runner is someone who leads. Billy, the front-runner in The Front Runner novel states "I have to have open space in front of me. I have to run free" (1996:63). In many regards Warren is herself a frontrunner. She was an 'outlaw' marathon runner before women were 'officially' allowed to run the event. In 1969 (the year of Stonewall) she was one of the twelve women who crashed the Boston Marathon. She was also the first female journalist for Runner's World, and was an important proponent of the "athletes' rights movement" publicly challenging gender, racial and sexual inequities within U.S. athletic organizations including the AAU. It was in 1972 while working as reporter for Runner's World that Warren met and spoke with gay athletes whose stories inspired her to write The Front Runner.

Francisco group discusses the importance of the running club in the lives of its members at that particular historical moment:

> In the early 70s, …There were few activities that were not centred around the bars. There were no gay hiking clubs, track, swimming, skiing, wrestling, bicycling or tennis clubs, bands, choruses, theatre groups. For many, the Lavender U Joggers was their first gay group they had joined. For more than a few, it was their first experience knowing and being around other gays. Although, many exchanged their full names, many others revealed only their first name. …Remember many gays at that time would not join an organization, because they were fearful of revealing their names[6].
>
> (Bud Budlong, 1996)

Currently, there are over one hundred Frontrunner clubs in eleven countries[7]. Since 1987 IFR gatherings have been held every year, during which representatives of Frontrunner clubs meet for an Annual General Meeting. The International Front Runners (IFR) organization has become increasingly formalized and adopted a Mission Statement and Constitution at the IFR Forum in September 1999. The Mission Statement is as follows:

> International Front Runners is an affiliation of Frontrunners clubs which promotes the sports of running, walking and related athletic activities for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders and their supporters; which supports the formation of activities of Front Runner clubs; which supports communications between the FrontRunners clubs and the wider community; which facilitates inter-club events; and which selects a representative to the Federation of Gay Games.
>
> (minutes of the 7th IFR Forum – September 1999)

The stated objectives of the IFR are to encourage Frontrunner activities, oversee relevant sports, affiliate widely (for example, as a Board member of the Federation of

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[6] This quote also speaks to "unique" role that the running club played in the gay and lesbian community, and is also taken from the International Front Runners Web Page: www.frontrunners.org

[7] There are Frontrunner clubs in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. However, the Frontrunners remain a group

Gay Games which gives IFR a voice in how Track & Field, Marathon and Triathlon events are conducted at the Gay Games), to encourage gender parity and to encourage membership development within the clubs (IFR 2000). The Front Runners Clubs resemble traditional ('straight') running clubs in that they typically offer weekly runs or walks, organize races and other running events, and clubs members routinely gather after runs to socialize. One of the main purposes of the Front Runners is to provide queer runners with "a comfortable *place* to participate in running, walking, and socializing" (IFR 1999 [emphasis added]).

The Front Runner clubs that are affiliated with the IFR are allowed to choose whether or not to elect officers, draft bylaws and accept membership dues. It is up to each individual club to determine how formal or informal the membership and club structure will be. Although most of the Front Runner clubs are running clubs, there are several clubs that include walkers and even a few clubs that are exclusively for walkers. In addition, there are three different spellings of the name – FrontRunners, Front Runners and Frontrunners – which is referred to in the IFR literature as "a further example of the clubs' diversity" (IFR 2000). It is evident from the successful expansion of the clubs that the Front Runners provides an important social and leisure space for queer runners who have chosen to run, socialize and train together.

Turning (The Project) Over

This brief introduction has outlined some prefatory guiding threads. In the chapters that follow, space is critically examined as a struggled-over set of social relations. The social space of the Toronto Frontrunners running club is unpacked and the

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largely based in the United States as there are 75 clubs operating in the U.S. Canada and Germany have the second largest number of Frontrunner clubs with 6 each (IFR 2001).

meanings attributed to this space are unmapped in order to reveal the multiple, often contradictory, relationship between space and the bodies that inhabit it. Departing from this point, I outline, in chapter two, the theories that sustain spatial research in cultural studies of sport, as well as the gaps, fissures and possibilities that remain in this work. Beginning with chapter three, the remaining sections pursue a "dialectical cartography" which, in large part, focuses on providing the grounds upon which a richer analysis of the cultural politics of resistance will be established. Rather than look for homogenous representation of collective space and experience in the Frontrunners, chapter three maps out a dialectical methodology that stresses dialectical movement, complexity and contradictions.

Lefebvre's dialectical approach applies an open and non-teleological dialectic that engages with the conflictual aspects of social space (Kofman & Lebas 1996). Drawing on this dialectical approach in chapters four and five I critically examine the meaning and significance of a social space created by sexual dissidents and shaped by the interplay of domination and resistance. Drawing on narrative accounts of twelve Frontrunners, chapter four begins by establishing what the social space of the running club means to those who inhabit it. What begins as a largely one-sided account of the running club is then read through Lefebvre's dialectical method to situate the experiences of the Toronto Frontrunners in tellingly contradictory discourses. On the one hand, the social space of the running club is described as a space of safety; on the other hand such safety is clearly limited to the largely fast, white, gay and 'monied' bodies that form the core of the running club. This chapter focuses on the geography of social relations within the

Frontrunners to trace out multiple forms of in/exclusion along lines of race, gender, and social class in addition to sexuality.

Chapter five takes up Lefebvre's concept of *abstract space* to examine the ways in which sexuality produces space through capitalist social relations. Lefebvre argues by critically examining the urban that the contradictions of society are revealed (Kofman & Lebas 1996). This chapter moves within the streetscapes of the gay village and the city of Toronto to tease out social differences of peoples' experiences of the street and to explore the meaning and significance of streets as settings in which social practices are played out. Chapter six concludes this project by drawing on the dialectical links that expose the possibility of creating more equitable social spaces.

ℵ

Chapter 2

Outing The Concepts: Towards a Critical Postmodern Spatial Theory in Sport Sociology

> Social power is reflected in and exercised through the production and control of space.
>
> (Katz in Brady, 1998:110)

The Spatial Turn

Spatial theory has become increasingly important to critical social theorists. Feminist cultural studies, postcolonial and queer theorists are among those outside of the "spatial" disciplines (i.e. geography, urban planning, architecture) that are increasingly exploring space and the geographies of power. Despite this proliferation of cultural work, the "spatial turn" in sport sociology has only recently emerged. The relationship between cultural geography and sport sociology is traced in this chapter in order to "out" the concepts and theories that underpin spatial research in cultural studies of sport and to position my project within both the field of sport sociology and the larger geographical study of culture. Obviously it is impossible to complete a comprehensive review and critique given the proliferation of cultural work in geography. Rather my intention is to offer a *critical* reading of spatial theory and to position my work within the developing spatial research foci within sport sociology, particularly within the cultural geography of sexuality and gender. By showing how and to what ends space is structured by particular social and cultural practices, I argue that a postmodern spatial theory is needed to explore gendered, raced and sexualized spaces within sport. In particular I aim to contribute to the debate by examining the social production of space and the possibilities of a socio-spatial approach to the production of identity categories.

To begin this process, it is first necessary to consider what space *is* and how it has come to be theorized. Theorizing space is particularly important as there is a tendency in a significant amount of academic work, which relies heavily on spatial metaphors to locate the spatial imagination, but which fails to clearly explicate the way in which space is conceptualized. The problem with this type of scholarship is outlined by Henri Lefebvre, who is increasingly recognized as one of the most important figures in the (re)spatialization of social theory (Light & Smith, 1998). In The Production of Space, originally published in 1974, Lefebvre explains that this type of geographical work "may well supply inventories of what *exists in* space, or even generate a *discourse on* space, [but it] cannot ever give rise to a *knowledge of* space" (Lefebvre 1991:7). An epistemology of space must be clearly developed or else spatial scholarship will continue to supply inventories and generate discourses on space while continuing to occlude and mask the ways in which spaces are produced and maintained through social conflicts that are inherently political and ideological. I am not suggesting that there is a master narrative on space, rather that it is necessary to consider how space is imagined politically in social theory and in everyday life. In other words, work that simply has *a* focus on space is not sufficient as it is necessary to unpack a *knowledge of* space.

In order to begin to unpack what space is and how it is produced I must turn to Lefebvre, whose work is often conspicuously absent from spatial debates. In part this absence can be explained by the fact that much of Lefebvre's work has only begun to be translated into the English language and he remains relatively unknown to North American audiences (Harvey 1993). For example, The Production of Space was not translated into English until 1991, and many of Lefebvre's other three hundred published works continue to lack English translation.

Lefebvre was among France's most influential theorists[1] and published in a wide variety of disciplines (Soja 1996; Stewart 1995; Shields 1999). However, Lefebvre is best known for his spatial approach which provides a rich and complex account of the production of space (Stewart 1995). In The Production of Space Lefebvre points to the increasing frequency with which "space" began to appear in academic writing and acknowledged that space is no longer tied to "strictly geometrical meaning" (1991:1). Thirty years later Lefebvre's comment remains strikingly relevant as there is what Keith and Pile (1993) call "a contemporary vogue for a spatialized vocabulary" which often deploys limited and unproblematized evocations of spatiality. Returning to The Production, Lefebvre argues:

> We are forever hearing about the space of this and/or the space of that: about literary space, ideological spaces, the space of the dream, psychoanalytic topologies, and so on and so forth… Thus Michel Foucault can calmly assert that 'knowledge [savoir] is also the space in which the subject may take up a position and speak of the objects with which he deals in his discourse'. Foucault never explains what space it is that he is referring to, nor how it bridges the gap between the theoretical (epistemological) realm and the practical one, between the mental and the social, between the space of the philosophers and the space of people who deal with material things (1991:3-4)

While the above quotation reveals Lefebvre's strident objections to the reductionist use of space it also reveals that fundamental to his own project is a Marxian notion of praxis and materialism. At this point I will remain focused on his rejection of the underdevelopment of spatial thinking which needs to be clarified before I can begin to elaborate on his engagement with materialism. It is in the pages that follow the above quotation where Lefebvre outlines a nuanced framework for the study of the *production* of space. Acutely aware of the tendency to fetishize space as a "mental thing", a container or place where social action is played out, Lefebvre acknowledges the difficulty of coming to terms with the notion of producing space: "[T]o speak of 'producing space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it" (1991:15).

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[1] Lefebvre was publishing, working and teaching alongside theorists more familiar to anglo-scholars such as Lacan, Foucault, Sartre, Althusser, Debord, Baudrillard and the Situationists to list a few.

In a review essay of The Production Of Space, Lynn Stewart offers that "Lefebvre treats space as a *product* of the human body, as a perception *and* as a conception, not simply as the physical imposition of a concept, or space *upon* the human body" (1995:610). As Kristen Ross (1988) explains, spatial understanding requires that we no longer think of space as an abstract or metaphysical concept but rather as a structure that our bodies help create. Ross acknowledges that vocabulary can be problematic when "words like 'historical' and 'political' convey a dynamic of intentionality, vitality, and human motivation, [while] 'spatial,' on the other hand, connotes stasis, neutrality, and passivity" (1988:8). Indeed, Lefebvre offers a radical reinterpretation of space, one that privileges the body in spatial theory and which has much in common with postmodern approaches.

For example, Lynn Stewart (1995) has drawn parallels between Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault's work as both situate the body as key to understanding the connections between power and space. However, there are significant differences that need clarification when comparing Lefebvre's and Foucault's theoretical frameworks. In Foucault's well known essay "The Eye of Power" which appears in Power/Knowledge (1980) but which, according to Soja (1989), was first published as a preface to Jeremy Bentham, La Panoptique (1977), Foucault writes that "[a] whole history remains to be written of *spaces* – which would at the same time be the history of *powers* (both of these terms in the plural) – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitat..." (Foucault 1980:149). As evidenced by his use of the Panoptican as a technology of power, Foucault largely considered space to be what Stewart calls "an architectural code or grid for defining the body" (1995:610).

Rather than define the body *through space*, Lefebvre explores how *bodies create or produce space*. The differences between Foucault's and Lefebvre's spatial approaches are significant. Foucault offers only a limited understanding of the spatialization of power and fails to develop a nuanced analysis of resistance. Lefebvre on the other hand insists that the ability to *produce* space is fundamental to understanding the nature of *resistance*. For Lefebvre, space can not be taken for granted and a spatial imagination must stress the possibilities for creative acts and human agency (Blum and Nast 1996). I return to further clarify the differences between Lefebvre and Foucault later in this chapter and devote much of the latter chapters of this project to spatializing resistance.

Three Moments In The Production Of Space

Lefebvre's theorization of space is difficult to summarize and is widely considered a "metaphilosophy"[2] as it engages in a wide spectrum of social theory and philosophy. Also, as previously mentioned, many of Lefebvre's published works are not yet translated into English. A sampling of English translated texts that offer interpretations of spatiality are Lefebvre's Critique of Everyday Life (1991), the Survival of Capitalism (1976) and Writings on Cities (1996). Lefebvre's most explicit theorization is in The Production of Space where Lefebvre identifies three 'moments' in the production of space. These 'moments' or different kinds of space constitute the conceptual triad that forms the basis for understanding social space. The triad consists of spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation. I outline them below and briefly state how they are linked to production relations. Lefebvre's three-part spatial dialectic is the foundation of his theoretical approach and this conceptual triad is returned to throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

Spatial Practice (or Perceived Space)

Spatial practice refers to the production and use of material or physical space. Lefebvre (1991) also refers to spatial practice as space that is *perceived.* He describes perceived space as the concrete materiality of spatial forms such as "the 'corner' of the street, a 'marketplace', a shopping or cultural 'centre', a public 'place' and so on" (1991:16). This aspect of spatialization (perceived space) is largely reliant on the visual. Perceived space is the space that can be empirically mapped and, as a result, it is spatial practice that has received the most attention from geographers. Perceived space is bounded space that includes, for example, a specific site or location such as the Church-Wellsely area of Toronto, which forms the "gay village". However, Lefebvre's understanding of spatial practice extends beyond the physical objects or material places that we occupy and includes our "daily routines" within the everyday (Shields 1999:162). Daily routines are the performances or activities that occur or literally "take place" with relative continuity in material space. An example of spatial practice is someone running through the streets or driving to work. In other words, spatial practice includes the operation of an established spatial economy characteristic of each social formation (place) and demonstrates the ways in which bodies interact with perceived or real space. Spatial practice, "as the process of producing the material form of social spatiality, is both *the medium and outcome of human activity*, behavior and experience" (Soja 1996:66 [emphasis added]). Spatial practice presupposes the use of the body and often entails the banal, unreflective practice of bodies and both produces and reproduces "specific places and spatial 'ensembles' appropriate to the social formation" (Shields 1999:162).

Representations Of Space (or Conceived Space)

Representations of space are intellectual or abstract spaces. Lefebvre (1991) denotes that representations of space are *conceived* or ideational spaces. Conceived space is the kind of space that we engage in through thought, ideas and memories. It includes ideas or understandings of space ranging from formalized geography to informal recollections that are inscribed in space. For example, a location such as a

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[2] Metaphilosophy was, according to Soja (1996) Lefebvre's preferred description for his work. It is also the term used by several other geographers to describe his work as it destabilizes territorialized

‘gay village’ or a racialized ‘ghetto’ is not only a physical space but is conceived, as there is some collective understanding of who ‘has their place’ within these sites, including what seems “normal” within these spaces. This is not to suggest that there is not struggle over just what each space *is* or how space is occupied but that there are dominate meanings which circulate with respect to perceived space. An idea or memory, which at first may seem far removed from geographical thought, is actually marked out through space.

According to Lefebvre (1991) conceptualized space is the “dominant space in any society” (1991:39). It is the dominant space as it is how we intellectually or discursively work out or negotiate space. It is the space of planners and bureaucrats and is constructed through discourse. This space is only encountered through the understandings and abstractions contained in plans, codes and designs that shape how we conceptualize ordered space (McCann 1999). Soja suggests that conceived space is tied to the relations of production in that representations of space impose order on space. He explains “[S]uch order is constituted via *control over knowledge, signs, and codes*: over the means of deciphering spatial practice and hence over the production of spatial knowledge (1996:67 [emphasis added]). While perceived space tends towards the visual, conceived is reliant on texts and produces regulatory discourses (Soja 1996).

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knowledge and is multi-interdisciplinary.

Spaces of Representation (or Lived Space)

Spaces of Representation[3] are where the "dominant" conceived space(s) and material spatial practice(s) are directly *lived*. Lived space is separate from perceived and conceived space at the same time that it encompasses them. *Lived* space is the third term that disrupts and disorders categorically closed notions of space (Soja, 1996:31). *Lived* space is what Lefebvre refers to as the space of "inhabitants" and "users" (1991:39). This is, according to Lefebvre, the space "which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (1991:39). Soja (1996) refers to lived space as real-and-imagined space as it stretches across what is material and practiced and what is thought and imagined. For Lefebvre this space is where multiple spatial practices and representations of spatialities are blended and lived. It is simultaneously a dominated space, which is experienced passively, and the space in which bodies, through both imagination and action, generate social change. Lived social space, Soja writes:

> combines the real and the imagined, things and thought on equal terms, or at least not privileging one over the other *a priori*, these lived spaces of representation are thus the terrain for the generation of "counterspaces," spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral or marginalized positioning (1996:68).

Edward Soja's 1996 Thirdspace presents the clearest use of Lefebvre's spatial theory. Insisting that space not be confined to a bicameral approach (as either a material or mental construct), Thirdspace is Soja's approximation of lived space. Thirdspace is:

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[3] In Donald Nicholson-Smith's (1991) English translation of Lefebvre's The Production of Space lived space is actually translated as representational spaces but spaces of representation is commonly used by English geographers to more clearly distinguish it from representations of space (conceptualized space). I too use spaces of representation for clarity.

> A knowable and unknowable, real and imagined lifeworld of experiences, emotions, events, and political choices that is existentially shaped by the generative and problematic interplay between centres and peripheries, the abstract and the concrete, the impassioned spaces of the conceptual and the lived, marked out materially and metaphorically in *spatial praxis*, the transformation of (spatial) knowledge into (spatial) action in a field of unevenly developed (spatial) power (Soja, 1996:31).

Thirdspace captures Lefebvre's conceptualization of social space as perceived, conceived and lived and is a postmodern term that works against theoretical closure and reductionism. Soja's notion of Thirdspace, as well as his 'trialectical' approach, are introduced here as they provide a useful point of entry into Lefebvre's spatial imagination and dialectical logic[4].

The Spatial Triad = Trialectical Thinking

The triad of spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation is the cornerstone of Lefebvre's spatial theory. Lefebvre insisted upon the use of triads in his work as a means of acknowledging three elements (or more) rather than being limited to two. Lefebvre posits that "[R]elations with two elements boil down to oppositions, contrasts or antagonisms" (1991:39). In an effort to move beyond dualisms and Manichaean concepts, Lefebvre adheres to the dialectical relations that exist within the triad and deliberately advances what Edward Soja (1996) calls "trialectical thinking". Trialectics is a term coined by Soja (1996) which follows Lefebvre's "une dialectique de triplicite" or "dialectics of triplicity". Lefebvre insisted on the deconstruction of binary logic in thinking about space. By engaging in a process of Thirding, a way of thinking is created that is not based on binarisms, where there is only an *either/or* choice. Trialectic thinking opens up the possibility of a *both/and also* logic that interjects an-Other[5] set of choices. Thinking trialectically is not about dismissing binaries entirely but is a "process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives" (Soja, 1996:5). The trialectics of spatiality is Lefebvre's central contribution to the respatialization of social theory. Soja introduces a concept called "thirding-as-Othering" which captures a trialectical approach.

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[4] Lefebvre's dialectical approach will be outlined in more detail in chapter three.

Thirding-as-Othering

In order to proceed further into a practical and theoretical understanding of lived social space or Thirdspace, it is necessary to turn to the critical strategy of *thirding-as-Othering* (Soja, 1996). Thirding, the introduction of an-Other term that disrupts and fractures binary reasoning, is critical to Lefebvre's understanding of spatial knowledge. Thirding-as-Othering transforms binarized categories based on "either/or" categorizations and introduces a third possibility, an open alternative that embraces "otherness" (Soja, 1996:61).

Thirding provides a way of thinking trialectically that is not confined to the either/or choice of real *or* imagined space. Instead, Soja chooses an-Other alternative that "disrupts the categorical closures implicit in the either/or logic" (1996:7). Therefore, any conceptualization of Thirdspace (or lived social space) is intentionally incomplete and is resistant to closure through categorical definitions. Soja is careful to argue that "[a]nything which fragments Thirdspace into separate specialized knowledges or exclusive domains - destroys its meaning and openness" (Soja, 1996:57). Approached this way, Thirding disorders and deconstructs binaries (such as objective-subjective, physical space/and mental space) and produces an open alternative that fuses these spaces into a third - a lived, social space. Thirdspace is not simply additive of real and imagined space, it "is both a space that is distinguishable from other spaces (physical and mental...) and a transcending composite of all spaces" (Soja, 1996:62). It is essential that Thirdspace, as a postmodern concept, retain multiple meanings. Social space is more than what can be perceived mentally, in thoughts, writing, language, "in logical and epistemological ideation" (Soja, 19965:63) and social space is more than "real" material, spatial practices that can be measured or accurately described.

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[5] Soja (1996) capitalizes 'Other' in his text to signify a critical exchange where issues of race, class and gender can be simultaneously addressed. An-Other set of choices holds the possibility for the

Soja describes Thirdspace as the chosen spaces for social struggle, the generation of "counterspaces" arising from marginalized positionings. However, Thirdspaces are not free from inequities and need to be problematized. Thirdspace is directly lived so it is filled with material spatial practices such as racism, sexism and homophobia that "concretize the social relations of production, reproduction, exploitation, domination and subjection" (Soja, 1996:68). Therefore, Thirdspace offers a strategic location, as it becomes a place of chosen marginality as well as being a dominated space. This is perhaps one of the most attractive conceptualizations of Thirdspace as it makes connections to everyday life, focuses on the margins while strategically engaging in modernist cultural politics. For example,

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inclusion of a multiplicity of perspectives.

bell hooks's (1990) essay, "Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness", creatively explores Thirdspace by discussing how the margins are not just sites of oppression but are also critically important sites of radical possibility, literally chosen spaces of resistance. hooks is careful not to overstate unproblematically the ways in which marginalization is produced and enforced, but offers a radical perspective by exploring these spaces as spaces of reclamation, spaces that enable and celebrate difference. hooks explains that rather than being a place of enforced marginality it is "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (1990:150). Reconceptualizing marginalization provides a means to explore the agency of those who create alternative spaces for diverse oppositional practices.

The Lefebvrean Project : A materialist interpretation of space

The Lefebvrean project is most clearly developed in the writing of Edward Soja[6] whose Postmodern Geographies (1989) is one of the first anglophone geography texts to fully work through Lefebvre's theoretical contributions. Soja acknowledges that the theorization of space "rarely penetrated the historicist armor of Marxist theory" (1989:47). Lefebvre is referred to as "the great French maverick Marxist" (Merrifield 1995) and as a "wayward or renegade Marxist" (Ross 1988:8) as his work gives primacy to a materialist interpretation and the hidden history of spatialization. Against the "dogmatic reductionism in the interpretation of Marx", Lefebvre argued for a "flexible, open and cautiously eclectic Marxism" (Soja

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[6] There have been other Anglo-American geographers such as David Harvey, Neil Smith and Frederic Jameson who also utilize Lefebvre's spatial framings in their work. I would argue, however, that Edward Soja, particularly in Thirdspace (1996), presents the richest and most developed assertion of

1989:48). Lefebvre began to rework this "eclectic Marxism" in 1939 with the publication of Le Materialisme Dialectique (Dialectical Materialism) which is one of the most widely read introductions to Marx ever written (Shields 1999; Soja 1989).

Within a Lefebvrean approach, the organization of space is considered a material product. For Lefebvre a materialist interpretation of space is critical as "the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence" (1991:129). This understanding is key to the reassertion of space in critical social theory as any social reality produces and is inscribed in space. This knowledge of space is important, as spatiality often "tends to be peripheralized into the background as reflection, container, stage, environment, or external constraint upon human behavior and social action" (Soja, 1996:71).

The next section briefly outlines a spatialized ontology and attempts to map the connection between the social and the spatial or what Soja (1980) conceptualized as the "socio-spatial dialectic". Soja refines his understanding of the socio-spatial dialectic in Postmodern Geographies (1989). He writes, "[i]f spatiality is both outcome/embodiment and medium/presupposition of social relations and social structure, their material reference, then social life must be seen as both space-forming and space contingent, a producer and a product of spatiality" (1989:129).

Towards A Spatial Ontology (or the Trialectics of Being)

Building upon the contributions of Lefebvre, Soja (1989; 1996) insists that in order to take space seriously it was necessary to compose a social ontology in which space mattered from the very beginning. Both perceived and conceived spaces are

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(social) spatiality and the clearest reinterpretation of the "constructive nexus of social theory" through the materiality of space, time and being (Soja 1989:120).

understood as being socially produced and reproduced and are ontologically and epistemologically part of the spatiality of social life. Human beings are produced through what Soja (1996) asserts is an ontological triad called the Trialectics of Being. The Trialectics of Being is comprised of the trialectics of Spatiality, Historicality and Sociality, which are "summary terms for the social production of Space, Time and Being-in-the-world" (Soja 1996:71).

Lefebvre challenged the persistent tendency in Western thought to "bifocalize on the interactive Historicality and Sociality of being" (Soja, 1996:71). Lefebvre argued that spatiality needs to be fully integrated in critical social theory. As noted by several geographers including Soja, there were "muted efforts to reactivate space" in the writings of other philosophers (such as Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Sartre) but none as comprehensively as Lefebvre (1996:71). Soja clearly develops spatial ontology in his work as he states that, "[s]ocial reality is not just coincidentally spatial, existing 'in' space, it is presuppositionally and ontologically spatial. There is no unspatialized social reality. There are no aspatial social processes" (Soja, 1996:46).

Spatialization requires a discursive turn in social theory that weaves the social, the historical and the spatial together in new and radically open ways, that consciously link "the production of space, the making of history and the composition of social relations or society" (Soja, 1996:7). What Lefebvre and Soja are arguing for is a theorization of space that involves more than "wrapping texts in appealing spatial metaphors" (Soja, 1996:96). This distinction is important as it provides a foundation to Lefebvre's and Soja's work, which attempts to inject a third dimension into the dually privileged dynamics of historicality and sociality (Soja, 1996).

The Double Illusion: opaqueness and transparency

> If is true that (social) space is a (social) product, how is this fact concealed? The answer is: by a double illusion, each side of which refers back to the other, reinforces the other, and hides behind the other. These two aspects are the illusion of transparency on the one hand and the illusion of opacity, or 'realistic' illusion, on the other.
>
> (Henri Lefebvre 1991:27)

At the same time that Lefebvre suggests that space is the ultimate locus and medium of struggle he also warns that space cannot be reduced to a surface that is entirely readable. I will outline the two 'illusions' below but caution that the two illusions are not antagonistic rather "each illusion embodies and nourishes the other" (Lefebvre 1991:30). The two illusions must not be considered in isolation as Lefebvre (1991) argues that a "double illusion" is maintained by oscillating between the two myths. An awareness of Lefebvre's double illusion is a vital part of the trialectical thinking since the double illusion works against reductionism which confines the spatial imagination.

The double illusion consists of the following:

1. *The illusion of transparency* occurs when space comes to be seen as purely a visual medium. Relying on the logic of visualization renders space as fully readable and intelligible and suggests that space can "taken in by a single glance from that mental eye which illuminates whatever it contemplates" (Lefebvre 1991:28). The myth of transparency has two significant traps: one that creates a "view of space as innocent, as free of traps or secret places" (Lefebvre 1991:28),

and another that reduces space to a mental space that can be "comprehended entirely through its presentations" (Soja 1996:63). Spatial knowledge cannot be limited to what is communicable (via speech or writing) as this reduces spatial knowledge, ignores what is absent or incommunicable, and allows the conceived or imagined to define social space (Soja 1996).

2. *The realistic illusion* or the 'illusion of opaqueness' is what Lefebvre calls the "illusion of natural simplicity" (1991:29). This illusion is concerned with the existence of 'things' or material objects in an appeal to a world that can be thoroughly measured and described. Relying on positivist understandings of space results in objective "things" having more 'reality' than "thoughts". Lefebvre suggests that the realistic illusion over-privileges material determinism and cautions against falling back into "the embrace of the illusion of transparency" (1991:29). Soja accurately proposes that the double illusion coincides "with determinist forms of subjectivism-idealism and objectivism-materialism" (1996:64). A trialectics of spatiality complicates this binary, as social space does not privilege any one aspect of space.

The Geographies of Gender and Sexuality

> I want to end by asking for a geography that acknowledges that the grounds of its knowledge are unstable, shifting and uncertain and, above all, contested.
>
> (Gillian Rose, Feminism and Geography, 1993:160)

Since the 1970s feminist geographical scholarship has struggled to find a place within the discipline of geography. Gillian Rose's landmark book Feminism and Geography (1993) provides a detailed account of the work feminists have undertaken to challenge naturalized assumptions about space and gender and to restructure what 'counts' as legitimate geographical knowledge. The first book devoted to geography and gender was not published until 1984 by the Women and Geography Study Group (WGSG) of the Institute of British Geographers (Rose 1993). Feminist geographers have made significant strides within and outside of the discipline, as evidenced by the journal Gender, Place and Culture (published by the WGSG since 1994), Linda McDowell's (1999) Gender, Identity and Place and Gill Valentine's (2000, 1999, 1996, 1995, 1993a, 1993b) pioneering work on lesbian geographies. All of this research addresses gender and space and reveals what Caroline Desbiens calls the "insertion of feminist knowledge in the 'clinks and cracks of the power-knowledge apparati'" (1999:182).

Until much more recently, however, spatiality has remained peripheral to theorizing on sexuality. In fact, Mapping Desire, published in 1995, is the first book to explore sexualities from a geographical perspective (Bell & Valentine, 1995). As recently as 1997, Jon Binnie published "Coming out of Geography," a paper which challenges the marginalization of lesbians, gay men and other sexual dissidents within the discipline. Binnie (1997) highlights significant restrictions with the production of geographical knowledge. Despite the limitations within the field of geography, there has been an explosion of work that explores the ways in which the spatial and the sexual constitute one another. A majority of this work remains focused on spaces in Western societies and are increasingly produced outside of the discipline of geography (Binnie 1997; Probyn 1995; Grosz 1995; Munt 1998).

Binnie and Valentine (1999) recently published a review of literature on sexuality and space in an article entitled "Geographies of sexuality – a review of progress". Binnie and Valentine (1999) outline the ethnocentricity of the literature and state that work on the geography of sexualities needs to move beyond the mapping of lesbian and gay spaces and engage in a more critical treatment of the differences between sexual dissidents. All three of these assertions (*ethnocentrism*, a privileged focus on *mapping* 'queer' space and the failure to identify *differences between sexual minorities*) are accurate critiques of work on sexuality and space but what remains missing is an articulation of the ways in which these three 'failings' are interrelated. Unless a theoretical framework is utilized that addresses the *production of* space and a *knowledge of* space, it will be difficult to interrupt work which focuses on places[7] or landscapes rather than engaging in a more dynamic and dialectical notion of social space. A Lefebvrean understanding of space, particularly an understanding of the double illusion, would help to move geographical work on sexuality beyond these ethnocentric, visual (as evidenced by the reliance on mapping) and homogenous understandings of space.

The double illusion reveals the dangers of relying on one kind of space (perceived or conceived) in theorizing space. Over-privileging either material or metaphorical space (via the double illusion) creates an unbalanced "reading" of space. Ethnocentrism, mapping and the unacknowledged differences amongst queer (GLBT) individuals and communities can be partially explained through these myths. In order to lay the groundwork for linking the three "failures" to Lefebvre's double illusion, I will begin by focusing on what Binne and Valentine call the "simple mapping of gay and lesbian spaces" (1999:175).

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[7] As stated earlier in this chapter, many cultural geographers theorize space in two ways, as either space or place, where space is defined as metaphorical and place as a location, or a concrete material form (McDowell, 1999). Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) argue that separating the concepts of space and place, gives "place greater concreteness, immediacy and cultural affect, while space is deemed to be abstract, distanced and ethereal" (Soja, 1996:40). This binarized space/place distinction is reductionary and confines spatial knowledge (Lefebvre 1991).

Mapping

Much of the earliest geographical work on gay men excluded lesbians altogether and focused on marking out the erogenous zones of cities, largely reducing 'gay space' to physical locations where cruising and public sex occurred. Although geographers have broadened their investigations, this type of mapping remains a central tool in a vast majority of research. For example, Maurise van Lieshout's (1997) research on public sex explores relatively hidden relationships and partially identified enclaves that exist within specific locations and then maps the material forms of this space with subsequently little discussion of the mental constructs or the lived experience of the inhabitants of these spaces.

The emergence of lesbian geographies, largely initiated by Gill Valentine, has evolved out of feminist analysis of the gendered constructions of space. Work in sexual geography such as Larry Knopp and Manuel Castells in the early 1980s was heavily criticized for the way lesbians were depicted as missing or absent from the urban landscape (Grant 1997; McDowell & Sharp 1997; Valentine 1993, 1995; Wolfe 1997). Knopp and Castells did recognize that sexuality is spatially inscribed but failed to explore race or gender as impacting cities' socio-spatial structures. Again this work largely mapped 'gay ghettos' in urban spaces. What remained unacknowledged was the focus on white (male) gentrification and economic resources in the establishment of gay spaces. The apparent invisibility of material lesbian landscapes suggested that lesbians were absent from the cartographers' map. Rather, as Gill Valentine (1995) has revealed in her work, what was absent was the ability to identify how lesbian spaces are produced and claimed through collective imaginings, social networks, and specific sites.

This is not to suggest that lesbian geographies have escaped the cartographers' map. There is ample evidence of "mapping" in lesbian geographies such as Yolanda Retters' (1997) work which explores 20 years of lesbian space(s) in Los Angeles by highlighting locational "anchors" or urban spaces which provide the setting for visible lesbian enclaves. What remains problematic is that many feminist geographers still focus on the ways in which lesbians are *seen*. For example, Ali Grant (1997) suggests in "Dyke Geographies" that visibility is necessary to fracture the hegemonic heterosexuality of everyday environments and that this disruption occurs through visibility of deviant and/or unintelligible bodies[8]. Her work then goes on to contradict itself by stating that despite the apparent invisibility, "that lesbian space is, of course, there if you know what to look for, and even if you don't" (1997:117). This suggests that there is more to lesbian social space than visibility at the same time that her project is largely limited to mapping spatial practice.

Lefebvre's "double illusion", which details the privileging of ocular epistemologies, reveals the traps of this type of research. Mapping should not be used as a primary tool of analysis in cultural geography as maps are too reliant on the "logic of visualization" (Lefebvre 1991). Maps only focus on concrete forms where space is fixed, dead and undialectical, in other words, *visible*[9]. This type of logic promotes the primacy of the gaze in geographic work and strengthens the double illusion. The "realistic illusion" renders space as fully intelligible and neutral, something that can be mapped, and the "illusion of transparency" hides the fact that maps are never value free. Radhika Mohanram argues that maps "require a selection of their content; in the chosen style of representation and of conceiving and articulating the human world maps both prompt and exert influence upon particular sets of social relations" (1999:143). Too often strategies of mapping are used as a primary tool of inquiry within geographic work. Gay and lesbian sexualities do not only occur in distinct, material or mapable perceived space, which can only be identified visually. Mapping spaces, such as a gay "ghetto", a gay bath house or a public space used for sex does not produce a diversity of knowledge as only certain bodies can occupy those spaces, and the "users" of this space cannot be reduced to the visual. There are multiple *lived* spatialities which do not have mapable coordinates.

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[8] In this essay, Grant's identifies spatial subversions as being necessarily reliant on visual disruptions and connects this notion of visibility with Judith Butler's (1990) theory of gender performance.

Lefebvre warns that "spaces made (produced) to be read are the most deceptive and tricked-up imaginable" (1991:143). What is perhaps most deceptive in geographical work is the way in which spaces are read as uncontested or innocent places. Maps, which inevitably reduce space to a visual (and verbal) system, hide contradictions. For example, mapping often reduces sexual geographies to (pseudo) "public" spaces such as the street, the neighborhood, and the community (Elwood 2000). Focusing on "public" spaces hides the multiple and contradictory ways in which sexualities are lived out across the shifting boundaries of the public and the private.

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[9] This what Lefebvre (1991) calls the modernist trio of readability-visibility-intelligibility (p. 96).

Maps and Ethnocentrism

Maps also erase spatialities not visible from an ethnocentric gaze. Mapping is inherently a colonizing project and marginalized bodies and spaces are routinely ignored as they are often not "present" in hegemonic discourses[10]. Mohanram (1999) argues in Black Body: Women, Colonialism and Space that, within the context of colonialism, the map has been forcefully used to designate the Other. This is also argued by Sparkes (1998) whose work highlights "the central role mapping played in the organization of imperial rule by European states overseas" (cited in Erickson 2001:8). The limitations of mapping projects cannot be overstated as the effects of mapping are experienced both within and outside geographies of sexuality. For example, the right to claim and map space is central to ongoing land claim debates between several First Nations communities and the Canadian government (Erickson 2001).

Maps, Ethnocentrism and the Failure to Identify Differences

Binnie and Valentine (1999) also identify the need for a more critical treatment of the differences between sexual dissidents. Research in space and sexuality has established that "space is not naturally authentically 'straight' but rather actively produced and (hetero)sexualised" (Binnie 1997:223). However, research on sexual dissidents often fails to extend notions of difference and acknowledge that the social production of space is also saturated with other relations of domination relevant to the construction of identity. This omission has been challenged by postcolonial critics such as Gamal Abdel-Shehid, Radhika Mohanram and Sherene Razack whose work interrogates race, space and identity.

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[10] An interesting queering of mapping occurs in the work of feminist performance artists Shawna Dempsey and Lorri Millan (1999) whose installation "*Lesbian National Parks and Services*" often included remapping spaces which largely remains invisible and unrecognized. For example in Banff,

Lefebvre's The Production of Space and Soja's Thirdspace raise major epistemological and methodological questions that are of critical importance to research on space and sexuality. A Lefebvrean spatial approach opens up the complexities of space, not merely in the recognition of erotic preferences and sexuality, but as a site for the maintenance and reproduction of complex power relations. In order to move past essentialist notions of space and explore *differences between sexual minorities*, such as race, class and gender differences among others, Lefebvre's analysis of lived social space and Soja's conceptualization of Thirdspace are strategically important. Differences can be explored in explicitly spatial terms through a Lefebvrean understanding of social space. This potential is acknowledged in the following statement by Rosalyn Deutsche in an article entitled "Uneven Development":

> Lefebvre's analysis of the spatial exercise of power as a construction and conquest of difference, although it is grounded in Marxist thought, rejects economism and predictability, opening up possibilities for advancing analysis of spatial politics into realms of feminist and anti-colonialist discourse... More successfully than anyone of whom I am aware, Lefebvre has specified the operations of space as ideology and built the foundation for cultural critiques of spatial design as a tool of social control (cited in Soja 1996: 106).

Much research on sexuality and space is unreflective of the materiality of sexual dissidents' lives, experiences and embodiments. Exploring lived social space with the recognition that social space is heterogeneous and complex creates opportunities

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the "Rangers" handed out street maps that included (un)sites such as an "Invisible Museum of Homosexual Mountain History".

for diverse research reflecting and interrogating different positionalities within the larger culture.

Lefebvre argues in The Production of Space that the human body is critical within spatial theory as the production of space proceeds from the body. Therefore modernist identity politics that create rigidly confined ways of "reading" bodies are unable to address the multiple ways in which bodies and spaces are produced (e.g., racialized, sexualized, classed and gendered, etc). A postmodern spatial theory engaging in a trialectical approach to space ensures that both space and identity will be theorized as "unstable, shifting, multiplicitous, situational, refractory, hybridizable, always being negotiated and contested, never static or fixed" (Soja 1996:113). Postcolonial critiques also expose the limitations that occur when difference and contradiction are not allowed to enter (spatial) discourse. Work such as David Theo Goldberg's (1993) "'Polluting the Body Politic': Race and Urban Location" addresses the material manifestation of racial knowledge expressed through the spatial practice of ghettoization. Goldberg[11] highlights how non-white bodies are dislocated and displaced through the production of "periphractic spaces". By engaging in a trialectical approach to lived social space new positions, voices, and identities are included, acknowledging multiple formations of difference within sexual minorities.

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[11] Goldberg's discussion of "periphractic spaces", while making an important link between apartheid space and racialized urban spaces of the West, does not discuss how displaced racial minorities are also located in discourses of sexuality and gender. An excellent companion to Goldberg's work is Glen Elder's (1995) "Of Moffies, Kaffirs and Perverts: Male homosexuality and the discourse of moral order in the apartheid state. Binnie and Valentine (1999) state that there are few studies "explicitly concerned with sexuality and the geographies of 'race' and racism… Moreover geographers studying 'race' and racism have also been culpable of neglecting sexuality in their discussion" (pg. 182). Linda Peake's (1993) "'Race'and sexuality: Challenging the patriarchal structuring of urban social space" echoes this concern and teases out the heterosexist and white cultural constructions that permeate much work within cultural geography.

Chapter Three of this dissertation outlines in much greater detail a spatial methodology that revolves around the disruption and disordering of difference.

Queer Geographies

> What I want to think about here are alternative geographies of the erogenous; ways of revisioning the sexes of space and the spaces of sex. By cruising a few texts, indulging in some casual encounters with theory, taking it (and you) from behind, perhaps I want to begin asking a few questions about geography's sex; nothing more than pillowtalk, then, and innuendo.
>
> (David Bell in "[*screw*]ING GEOGRAPHY 1995:127)

A year before the first space and sex text, Mapping Desire (1995), was published, David Bell delivered a paper at the Association of American Geographers Conference in a session titled "Sexuality and Geography" (Bell 1995). His paper, "Fucking Geography" was censored in the conference handbook and renamed "Screwing Geography". As Bell (1995) later outlines in an editorial, his intention at the conference was to encourage the queering of geography, in other words, to move beyond sanitized notions of sex and sexuality, to explore the sexed body through alternative geographies. The paper did meet these objectives as well as vividly reveal, through the censoring of the paper's title, the existence of discriminatory practices within the discipline. Despite the initial and sustained resistance in the field to explore issues of sex and sexuality, the discourse on Queer has become perhaps the most powerful way for geographers to reimagine space and sex. What I want to do here briefly is examine the way in which geography is being queered.

Queer, a term with numerous meanings and possibilities, is employed two ways in this project. On the one hand, queer is utilized as an umbrella term that is inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people. This notion of queer can also be problematic and restrictive when there is an assumed coalition of LGBT peoples (Kirsh 2000). Queer in this sense must only be used as a term of affiliation, to collectively recognize sexual minorities, while at the same time acknowledging that there is a diverse community of sexual dissidents, whose identities are not coherent and fixed but are fluid, multiple and contradictory. Queers do not share an identity, "only an opposition to the discipline of normalization" (Munt, 1998:14). David Halperin (1995) describes queer as follows:

> "Queer" does not name some natural kind or refer to some determinate object; it acquires its meaning from its oppositional relation to the norm. Queer is by definition *whatever* is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant. *There is nothing in particular to which it necessarily refers* (pg. 62 emphasis in original).

This brings me to the second way in which queer is utilized in this project. Queer, as explained in the above quotation, is that which is oppositional, disruptive or destabilizing of what is considered normal or legitimate. This understanding suggests that queer, while often focusing on the incoherencies and instability of heterosexuality, must not be limited to the erotic or even necessarily to sexuality. Within this loosely etched out notion of the term queer is a means of retaining *positionality*, "not as a thing but as a resistance to the norm" (Halperin, 1995:66).

The body of theory known as queer is preceded by the development of postmodernism and poststructuralism in the 1970s and can be traced, in part, to Michel Foucault (Kirsch 2000). Foucault's The History of Sexuality outlines a dominant strand of queer theory rooted in the idea that there is no "natural" sexuality (Jagose 1996). By critiquing dominant systems of gender, queer theory takes as a basic tenet that identities are provisional and contingent. Judith Butler's Gender

Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity (1990) has significantly impacted "post" gender discussions, framing gender as performatively constituted. Butler identifies gender as an ongoing discursive practice and reveals the ways in which gender is a cultural fiction, "a performative effect of reiterative acts" (Jagose 1996:84). Butler's work continues to have unshakable currency and continues to inform and influence work in the geographies of sexuality.

The Queerification of Space

What is queer space? In an anthology entitled Queers in Space, Ingram, Bouthillette & Retter (1997) suggest that queer people and spaces are "'out there floating,' disconnected and separated" (p. 6). Queer, in this instance, is a marking out, a separation. Ingram et al suggest that queer space "enables people with marginalized (homo)sexualities and identities to survive and to gradually expand their influence and opportunities to live fully" (1997:3). This description of queer space resituates what largely began with a single focus on ghettoization and investigates queer culture more fully, suggesting that there are multiple sites and spaces produced for queer "refuge, habitation and play" (Ingram et al 1997:3).

In accordance with queer's ambiguity, the refusal of fixed identity and the numerous contestations of the term 'queer', it would be limiting to suggest any singular definition of queer space. Queer spaces are commonly framed as heavily erotized spaces, such as lesbian bars (Wolfe 1997), or places for sexual encounters like parks or ravines (Ingram 1997). Architect Jean-Ulrick Desert argues that queer space is produced as desires become "solidified" and co-opt a space (1997:21). For Desert, queer space originates through the act of redefinition, pushing the normative condition of space to the boundaries. For example a home is configured in such a way that programs space through heterocentric activity. Desert explains that the "Master Bedroom, set in isolation over a litter of smaller bedrooms, orchestrates a social order of age, sexuality and ownership" (1997:22). For Desert the dictates of "family values" are reinforced through housing arrangements. Therefore when queers occupy and shift the use of space in ways that do not presuppose heterocentric activity, the space has been queered. This reading of queer space could be extended to include gay and lesbian bars, bathhouses, sex stores, and AIDS memorials. The strength of this notion of queer space is that heteronormative "uses" and narratives of space become displaced, even if only momentarily and are redefined by queers through spatial practice. Desert's understanding of queer space is not limited to stable immutable places but is extended "at its most radical state" to metaphorical conceptualizations outside of architectural apparatuses (1997:24). Unfortunately Desert does not extend his more "radical" metaphorical notion of queer space beyond spaces with fixed material parameters such as pieces of queer art or queer(ed) homes.

Jon Binnie's (1995) article "Trading Places: consumption, sexuality and the production of queer space" outlines the way in which queer consumerism and the queer media produce queer space. However, this notion of queer space is highly problematic, as acknowledged by Binnie, in that there is a taken-for-granted assumption that queer spaces are inclusive. Often consumer-oriented queer space is oppressively produced around the rich, white, affluent and gay. This does not mean that queer consumerism does not produce queer space but that any reading of queer space must be interrogated. Queer spaces are not places of uniform, homogenous culture. In The Production of Space, Lefebvre identifies a succession of three historical spatial forms – absolute space, historical space and abstract space. Abstract space provides a useful way to critically examine queer spaces of consumption (van Ingen 2000). Abstract space, or the dominance of commodified space, is investigated in more detail in chapter five.

In his later article entitled "Coming out of Geography: towards a queer epistemology?" Binnie (1997) suggests that camp is the means to produce queer space. Binnie's appreciation of camp is premised on the fact that it can undermine the heterosexual definition of space and create visibility for sexual dissidents. While camp does produce a particular social and spatial imaginary, I am cautious of the assumption that camp is the privileged means by which to produce queer space. The creation of sexual dissident visibility is one necessary component of queer space, but in a Lefebvrean approach to space, ocular epistemologies must not be privileged as *the* means of producing or identifying (queer) social space. Binnie's (1997) endorsement of the "delicious possibilities of camp" (pg.231) must be more fully interrogated since the desire to become fully visible does not necessarily transcend or celebrate social and cultural marginalization within a diverse queer community. In addition, camp has largely been associated with and claimed by gay men. Binnie does recognizes that camp is not necessarily a critical practice among all gay men nor is it equally embraced by sexual dissidents situated differently along lines of race, class, gender, and ability.

Architect Arron Betsky (1997) suggests that queer spaces hold liberating possibilities. He writes that queer space is:

> a useless, amoral and sensual space that lives only in and for experience. It is a space of spectacle, consumption, dance, and obscenity. It is a misuse or deformation of a place, an appropriation of the building and codes of the city for perverse purposes. It is a space in between the body and technology, a space of pure artifice (pg. 5).

What is clear from the above description is that queer space is hinged on the notion of disruption and necessarily involves the built environment. Although for Betsky the purpose of queer space is ultimately sex, "the making of a space either for that peculiar definition of the self as an engine of sexuality or for the act of sex itself" (1997:20). In contrast to other definitions, Betsky's queer space has no productive purpose.

Under the rubric of queer space there are numerous possibilities. What is consistent in the literature, however, is that queer spaces are largely spaces of struggle and most often remain tenuous and vulnerable (Ingram et al 1997). Within some queer space there is an obligation for secrecy and invisibility and other queer spaces such as gay and lesbian bars or memorials sites are situated in pseudo-public spaces. Queer spaces have been described as transitory and fleeting spaces and as having varying purposes and existences ranging from spaces that: "recount resistance to isolation, invisibility and violence" (Ingram et al 1997:10); to places for sex (Betsky 1997; van Lieshout 1997); spaces for queer political activism (Sommella 1997); queer domestic spaces (Johnston & Valentine 1995); places for producing (queer) art (Hertz, Eisenberg & Knauer 1997), as well as places for "play, refuge, and habitation" (Ingram et al 1997). Queer spaces are both invisible and visible, structured and unstructured can have multiple purposes and potentialities. Queer spaces are numerous and complex as well as fragile and reflect the multiple and fluid ways that sexual identities are imagined, negotiated and contested.

Spatial Theory within Sport Sociology

This section surveys the rethinking of "space" in sport sociology. I begin this section by tracing the emergence of geographically framed approaches to sport sociology. As a starting point I provide an overview of research that focuses on sport and space, and suggest that, while these works provide important beginnings for developing a spatial imagination, there are several limitations that need to be addressed within sport sociology. A few examples are provided to illustrate the characteristics of research that confines a postmodern spatial inquiry. I then conclude this chapter with a discussion of the ways in which Lefebvre offers the potential for the radical re-interpretation of a critical postmodern spatial theory within sport sociology.

Putting Sport Sociology on the Map

In 1983, Allen Ingham, president of the International Committee for Sociology of Sport (ICSS), organized the first session focusing explicitly on sport and space. A second session entitled "Sport and Space" was organized by Ingham and Nuria Puig at the 1990 ICSS meeting (Heinemann 1993). These two ICSS sessions were the catalyst for the first journal issue in the field of sport sociology dedicated to the topic of sport and space. "Sport and Space" was a double issue edited by Puig and Ingham and published in the International Review for the Sociology of Sport (IRSS) in 1993. This issue is significant as it was the first "spatialized" issue of an

English language sport sociology journal and as such needs to be critically examined. The issue contains fourteen articles submitted from writers from ten different countries. Numerous approaches are used in the issue, reflecting the interdisciplinarity of work in spatial theory and the effort to "build up a theoretical framework on the relations between these two social realities" (Puig & Ingham 1993). My concern remains with investigating the theoretical framework utilized in this volume.

Puig and Ingham's introduction to the issue clearly states that "sport space is a social space" and that "space is always social", thus situating at least the initial framing of the issue within an explicitly Lefebvrean spatial approach (1993:101-102). Drawing from Lefebvre's The Production of Space, the editors posit that space is the product of human action, thereby highlighting the "production" of space and the centrality of the body to this production. However, none of the articles in the issue engage in a spatial imagination that reflects an explicitly Lefebvrean spatial approach. Only two articles (Bale 1997; and Puig, Castillo, Pellegrino & Lambert 1997) reference Lefebvre and do so only briefly. Bale (1997) references Lefebvre once in a discussion of the commodification of space and in two sentences Puig et al (1997) acknowledge Lefebvre's treatment of space as a support, structure and medium of activity. What this reveals is that Lefebvre's analysis remains either absent or superficially utilized within sport sociology, despite the fact that Lefebvre is recognized as one of the foremost spatial theorists.

Several articles in the IRSS (1993) issue analyze sports facilities (Metcalfe 1993; Bale 1993; Puig et al 1993; Eichberg 1993; Nagbol 1993) and employ a range of methodological approaches and frameworks - such as structure and agency (Metcalfe 1993); Foucault's work on the disciplinary space of prisons (Bale 1993); factoral analysis[12] (Puig et al 1993); and architectural analysis (Eichberg 1993 & Nagbol 1993). While these approaches are valuable, they limit work on sport and space from a focus on social space to one of *perceived* space or spatial practice (Lefebvre 1991). Unfortunately, none of the articles take a dynamic and *production-oriented* approach to studying the relationship between the social and the spatial and no article distinguishes between the different kinds or moments in the production of social space (i.e., spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation). There is a taken-for-grantedness of spatial meanings that needs to be questioned. What is also remarkable is that there is a striking lack of engagement with work from the field of geography. By the early 1990s, there existed a critical mass of cultural and feminist geography that remains peripheral to most work included in the 1993 issue. For example Henri Lefebvre (1974, 1991), Edward Soja (1989), Sandra Bowlby (1989), Doreen Massey (1991), Linda McDowell (1983, 1984, 1989, 1992) and the Women and Geography Study Group whose members have been publishing feminist geography since 1980, have all published work outlining the reassertion of space in social theory. Yet, these analyses are noticeably absent in the volume. This raises an important question: how is it possible to (re)spatialize social theory if there is a lack of engagement with a broad spectrum of geographical literature?

John Bale's compelling article "The Spatial Development of the Modern Stadium" demonstrates the ways in which stadiums are highly territorialized spaces.

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[12] Factoral analysis, according to Puig et al, illustrates "at a single glance the most dominant characteristics which distinguish trends" within different cases (Puig et al 1993:203).

His article also begins to outline postmodern sporting landscapes, a project that he further develops in his text, The Landscapes of Modern Sport (1994). It is useful to explore Bale's article in order to highlight some of the strengths and limitations within the "spatial turn" in sport sociology and the issue "Sport and Space". Bale's article is notable for the way it explores how bodies are regulated and constrained in space and for asserting that space increasingly matters as a vantage point of critical insight. However, this article also exemplified the underdevelopment of spatial discourse and theorizing within sport sociology.

Underdevelopment of spatial discourse

Unlike the majority of articles in "Sport and Space", Bale's article does draw from cultural geography through Robert Sack's (1983, 1986) work on territoriality. Sack's notion of territoriality is then juxtaposed with Michel Foucault's work on the containment and surveillance of bodies through the panoptican, which Bale then explores through the design of football stadiums. Bale states that "in order to save political and economic costs a series of basic changes *to the use of space,* has taken place in the exercise of power" (1993:122). Here it is the *use* of already existing space that is the focal point. The predominant focus on a particular arrangement of space delimits the spatial imagination by limiting inquiry to the *usage* of space rather than interrogate aspects of spatial thinking and practice that are related to the re/production of power. A dialectical understanding of the production and control of space is replaced with a focus on space limited to a physical form which poses a theoretical problem. Space is reduced to a fixed, immobile, dead place where relations of power are expressed.

Foucault's work is influential in Bale's article and often provides the theoretical centerpiece for work investigating space. Foucault's contributions to critical human geography are important as he maintained that space is central to the analysis of power. However, there are numerous critiques that reveal significant deficiencies in Foucault's spatial imagination (Smith & Katz 1993; Soja 1989, 1996; Spivak 1988; Lefebvre 1991). It is necessary to be aware of these deficiencies in order to move past the reliance on spatial metaphors and taken-for-granted understandings of space and to reveal the "thick ideological layers that have built up over …the relationships between Spatiality and Historicality" (Soja 1996:149). Foucault explored the exercise of power and knowledge and situated or mapped these relations *onto* space. Smith and Katz explain: "Foucault's pervasive substitution of spatial metaphor for social structure, institution and situation continues to elide the agency through which social space and social relations are produced, fixing these instead as the outcome of juridico-political forces" (1993:73). This in effect is what Edward Soja calls Foucault's "deflected emphasis on spatiality", which fails to recognize how social agents produce space and socio-spatial relations (1989:63).

Soja argues that Foucault did not fully crystallize his assertion of the significance of spatiality, focusing instead on crucial historical moments. In other words, Foucault does not engage in an ontological struggle to rebalance the interpretable interplay between history, geography, and society (Soja 1989). As Soja outlines in a section aptly titled the "ambivalent spatiality of Michel Foucault" (1989:16), Foucault never fully developed his conceptualizations of space and had to be "coaxed into recognizing his formative attachment to the geographer's spatial perspective, to admit that geography was always at the heart of his concerns" (Soja 1989:19). In an interview with the editors of the journal, Herodote, and reprinted in the essay "Questions on Geography" in Power/Knowledge Foucault is "coaxed" into the following statement:

> I have enjoyed this discussion with you because I've changed my mind since we started. I must admit I thought you were demanding a place for geography like those teachers who protest when an education reform is proposed, because the number of hours of natural sciences or music is being cut. ...I didn't see the point of your objection. Now I can see that the problems you put to me about geography are crucial ones for me. Geography acted as the support, the condition of possibility for the passage between a series of factors I tried to relate. Where geography itself was concerned, I either left the question hanging or established a series of arbitrary connections. ... Geography must indeed necessarily lie at the heart of my concerns (1980:77; cited in Soja 1989)

In Place of Space

At this point I must stray from the IRSS "Sport and Space" issue to more fully explore the development of geographical concepts in sport sociology. John Bale (1988) published an article in the journal Progress in Human Geography entitled "The place of 'place' in cultural studies of sports". Published prior to the IRSS 1993 issue, Bale explains that "geographers have arrived relatively late on the sports studies scene" (1988:507). Although there is a significant amount of crossdisciplinary spatial work on sport, it is also true to state that sport sociologists have only begun to arrive on the spatial scene. Bale (1988) outlines five basic approaches employed in sport geographic studies:

1. The identification of temporal and regional variations in different sports attributes;

2. The modelling and analysis of the migration of elite athletes;
3. The locational dynamics of sports franchise relocation and movement;
4. The externality and multiplier effects of sports events;
5. Sport and the cultural landscape.

The first four approaches outlined rely heavily on positivist approaches while the last approach reflects a more cultural-geographic perspective primarily focused on specific sports landscapes highlighting the tangible effects of the increased artificiality, partitioning and specialization of sport landscapes. As profiled by Bale, 'place' and localities have become a significant focus in geographical studies of sport.

The significance of place and its categorical separation from space is the explicit intention of Bale's[13] review. This space/place distinction is problematic when considered through a Lefebrean perspective as it reflects a reductionary approach to the geography of sports. A focus on 'place' rather than space limits spatial inquiry to the concrete materiality of spatial forms within a tightly constrained spatial grid. Place can be distinguished from spatiality but it cannot be conceptualized as its equivalent. In other words, it is possible to develop inquiries into place(s) but this does not produce an understanding of social space. Each type of space needs to be theorized and understood as "ontologically and epistemologically part of the spatiality of social life" (Soja 1989:120). Soja explains "spatiality is socially produced and, like society itself, exists in both substantial forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups, an 'embodiment' and medium of social life itself" (1989:120). Defining the interconnections between the three moments of space (spatial practice, representations of space and spaces of representation) and the ways in which they interrelate and overlap is the most formidable challenge facing sport sociologists, particularly since the spatial debate thus far has revolved around 'place' almost to the exclusion of social space.

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[13] "However, it is not only space but also *place* – the central focus of the present review – which aids an understanding and appreciation of the significance of sport in modern society" (Bale 1988:510).

Following the 1993 special issue "Sport and Space", the IRSS published a second special issue entitled "Sport in Space and Time" in 1994. This issue primarily examines the spatial and temporal boundaries of sport, arguing that sport sociologists must not forget the space and time context. An examination of Michele Metoudi's article "Sociology of Sport and Space a Productive Bet" is highlighted here to illustrate the way traditional studies in sport sociology were encouraged to include space (and time). Metoudi argues that often work on time and space does not go beyond initial musings even in research where the empirical phase focuses on space or time issues. "Most of the work devoted to subjects including space and time dimensions usually slip into sport practicing analyses that do not keep to this topic" (Metoudi 1994:370). Indeed simply to have *a* focus on space is not sufficient. Yet Metoudi argues that these "slippings" are productive as questions relating to the distribution of space or time "drive sociologists to rich inquiries" (1994:371). Instead of reasserting space in social theory, Metoudi (1994) suggests that space and time are productive as *pretexts* to studies rather than as *subject/objects* of study. Metoudi understands that there is a relationship between bodies and space but views this relation as static rather than dynamic.

The other side of what Metoudi's article raises is less debatable. Metoudi argues that space and time are equally important dimensions and acknowledges that space is not homogenous and generalized; rather, there exists what he calls a "hysteresis of space". His idea of hysteresis (of time or space) is that "sport can express many different values (maybe even opposite values) at the same time and in the same place for different social groups. This aspect can be the key of many hypotheses, especially in quantitative sociology" (Metoudi 1994:373). These assertions are important but again only focus on the *use* of static, fixed space and papers over any differences or contradictions existing *within* different social groups.

In the very last section of his article, Metoudi briefly suggests that aspects of time and space "may be imaginary" (1994:374). Metoudi's concept of space does not consider the social production of space nor does it recognize Lefebvre's assertion that "[S]pace is political and ideological. It is a product literally filled with ideologies" (1991:). It is clear that we need to move towards more sophisticated and nonreductionist models of analysis that do not treat space as being epiphenomenal to sociological inquiry. By engaging in postmodern spatial theory, primarily based in Lefebvre's work, and taken up through Edward Soja's concept of Thirdspace, sport sociologists can fully develop a spatial imagination and move past "conventional" understandings.

Moving Towards a Critical Postmodern Spatial Theory in Sport Sociology[14]

> The occlusion of the spatial calls for a radical repositioning of spatial analysis that brings space in from the margins to the center of analysis and interrogation (Allen 1999:252).

Lefebvre argues in The Production of Space that the human body remains at the core of spatial theory as the production of space proceeds from the body. Therefore modernist identity politics that create rigidly confined ways of "reading" bodies are unable to address the multiple ways in which bodies and spaces are produced (i.e. racialized, sexualized, classed and gendered, etc.). A postmodern spatial theory engaging in a trialectical approach to space ensures that both space and identity will be theorized as unstable and shifting, and as "always being negotiated and contested"(Soja 1996:113). Postcolonial critiques, which Soja (1996) emphasizes clearly overlap with postmodern spatial theory, also expose the limitations that occur when difference and contradiction are not allowed to enter (spatial) discourse. Work such as David Theo Goldberg's (1993) "'Polluting the Body Politic': Race and Urban Location" addresses the material manifestation of racial knowledge expressed through the spatial practice of ghettoization. Goldberg highlights how non-white bodies are dislocated and displaced through the production of "periphractic spaces". By engaging in a trialectical approach to lived social space new positions, voices and identities are included acknowledging multiple spatial formations of difference and otherness.

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[14] This title and this section are largely informed by Ricky Lee Allen's (1999) article "The Socio-Spatial Making and Marking of 'Us': Toward a Critical Postmodern Spatial Theory of Difference and Community. Allen's paper develops discussions around "critical spatial theories that rely on the critiques of marginalized voices to identify, deconstruct, and transform problematic conceived notions of space and spatial practices" (1999:251).

Postmodern spatial theory assumes that space is socially produced and works towards the trialectical assertion of spatiality, giving spatiality ontological equivalence with historicity and sociality. Modernist or conventional understandings, as Allen (1999) explains, maintain arbitrary borders between "real" and "imagined" space and submerge 'Othered' spatialities. By explicitly rethinking spatialities through Soja's terms as *both/and also* instead of the *either/or* binary, spatialities are acknowledged as simultaneously real-and-imagined. Real-and-imagined or lived social space not only reflects a reconceptualization of space but also of power. Lefebvre writes that "the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into a space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process producing that space itself" (1991:129). Lived social space connects the wider structures of power to the lived experience of individual and collective actors. As Allen clarifies, "critical studies of space offer a reconnection of the material, the social, and the known that cultural and historical studies often mask or occlude" (1999:249). Space can then be examined as a point of ideological struggle and as the site for the re/production of power (Allen 1999).

Sport sociology would greatly benefit from an engagement with critical postmodern spatial theory. Critical postmodern spatial theory works against what Soja calls "the broader philosophical hegemony of … modernist epistemologies and their tacit silencing of other knowledges" (1996:80). There remains a need for better interpretations of the ways in which the constitution of gender, race, class and sexuality within specific localities contribute to sport space as social space. In order to conduct research which has a sensitivity to social categories of power (beyond gender and class) requires that we address the terms on which we conduct our research. Sport sociologists must move inquiry beyond physical sporting landscapes and "place" as homophobia, heterosexism and racism are social constructions with spatial impacts that are not always clearly *visible* in the physical landscape. Research must move past descriptive accounts of sport landscapes and geographies, abandon spatial and conceptual generalizations and begin to unpack the heterogeneity of race and sexuality and other relations that characterize sport spaces as social space.

There is a small amount of space-based research in sport sociology that does engage with critical postmodern spatial theory. Exceptional examples can be found in Ben Carrington's (1998) article "Sport, Masculinity, and Black Cultural Resistance" and on a smaller scale John Hughson's (1998) brief research note "Soccer Support and Social Identity: Finding The 'Thirdspace'", as both investigate the social space of marginalized groups within sport. Carrington examines the role that cricket plays in narrating identities and relations between Black and White men and Hughson explains aspects of ethnic identity among a group of soccer 'hooligans'. In both of these articles, postmodern spatial theory provides insight into the contestation of identity. What is momentous in these articles is the focus on human agency and subaltern spatial knowledges which are counter to dominant spatialities. In other words, the articles interrogate space where social difference(s) are re/produced and theorize this 'Other' space as trialectically interrelated and interdependent to the real-and-imagined.

The Thirdspace or lived social space creatively explored in Carrington's and Hughson's articles are postmodern spaces where views from the margins are worked into critiques of hegemonic culture. Noting that lived social space is the realm where ideological struggles occur, these authors are careful to both problematize and recognize incongruencies within lived social space. Lived social space is not only where processes of Othering are produced and maintained; lived social space is also the space of resistance. Carrington details how Black cultural resistance to racism can be achieved through cricket. Hughson probes the socio-spatial practices of socially marginalized young soccer fans who engage in hooligan practices as a form of resistance. These two examples demonstrate that not all forms of resistance revolve around social justice nor are all forms of resistance unproblematic or emancipatory. For example, Carrington acknowledges that Black women often occupy marginal positions in sports clubs and Hughson clearly asserts that hooligan practices, while resistant, are destructive and obviously problematic. These acknowledgements mirror the warnings of Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996) that spaces of resistance or 'counterspaces' need to be problematized.

The movement towards a critical postmodern spatial theory in sport sociology is underway. Research, such as this project which explores how sexual minorities fashion a spatial presence and practice outside the norms of prevailing (enforced) social spatialization, as well as work by Jane Unan (2000) and Caroline Fusco (2000) is beginning to address the gap within sport sociology and move research beyond spatial metaphors. However more work is needed, particularly research that does not overlook the complexity of our multiple spatial and social belongings and which places the body at the centre of the spatial imagination.

The body is the core of our social and spatial experiences and must be focused on in order to understand the connection between power and space. The body, as highlighted in Lefebvre and Soja's work, is the means for disrupting the normal ordering of space. There is a significant lack of research that investigates bodies and the critical agency of producing alternative spatialities. A critical postmodern spatial approach in sport sociology has the potential to bring subaltern lived spaces to the center of spatial discourse without homogenising subaltern subjectivity. However, in order for this spatial turn to occur, underdeveloped spatialities must be strategically and trialectically reworked into what Allen (1999) calls a Thirdspatial methodology. A Thirdspace methodology is rooted in a Lefebvrean spatial approach, draws heavily from the work of Edward Soja and provides the "means to uncover and narrate the socio-spatial production of identity" (Allen 1999:271). The next chapter outlines in detail a Thirdspace methodology, which travels across disciplinary boundaries and has the potential to dismantle spatial underdevelopment in social theory and highlight 'counterspaces' infused with resistant possibilities.

Chapter 3

Tongues Untied[1]: A Thirdspace Methodology

> If social reality is in itself contradictory, the task of social science is to investigate the real contradictions of the social situation and posit them against each other. In other words, if social processes are essentially contradictory, then empirical methods based on an exclusion of contradictions will be invalid for uncovering a contradictory social reality.
>
> (Steinar Kvale, InterViews 1996:57)

> To recognize space, to recognize what 'takes place' there and what it is used for, is to resume the dialectic; analysis will reveal the contradictions of space.
>
> (Henri Lefebvre, The Survival of Capitalism cited in Soja 1996:44)

There is an increasing amount of interdisciplinary research within the social sciences that is embedded in spatial inquiry. In the previous chapter I caution that much of this research takes up "space" or "place" without careful consideration of the theory or philosophical positionings of the methods used for spatial analysis. This chapter takes up the challenging task of outlining the methodological and philosophical lines of Lefebvre's dialectical approach as a means of making theoretical and practical sense of the contemporary world of Thirdspace, and more particularly, of the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners.

A basic tenet of this project is that space is political and strategic[2]. In other words, space is both a social and a material product "literally filled with ideologies" (Lefebvre 1976:31). Moreover, in order to fully consider the production of space as a social product, it is necessary to utilize a methodology capable of likening "the production of space to the production of any given type of merchandise" (Lefebvre 1976:31). The dialectical method, as outlined by Lefebvre, and adapted in the writings of Soja and Shields, analyzes contradictions in the production and utilization of space while maintaining that space is political. This chapter begins to unpack the dialectic approach, a task which presents several challenges as "the implications of dialectical philosophy for qualitative interview research have been little addressed" (Kvale 1996:56). First, however, some cautionary remarks are necessary. Just as a topographical map provides its reader with a general but very abstract view of the landscape, situating the peaks and canyons, but not depicting what they actually look like, dialectical materialism has been only vaguely outlined as a methodology. Lefebvre (1968) insists that no expression of dialectical materialism could be definitive but that a dialectical approach must continue searching for solutions. In this chapter I take up this search and elaborate the complexity and dimensions of dialectical thinking. I begin by outlining Lefebvre's three-part dialectic and then position my inquiry within a dialectical framework both as a technique for gathering evidence (method) and as a theoretical orientation guiding the conceptual framing of my inquiry (methodology).

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[1] This chapter is titled "Tongues Untied" which is the title of Marlon Riggs' (1990) film. *Tongues Untied* describes the homophobia, racism and silencing that confront Black men in the U.S. The film uses several different methods to tell stories that are often silenced – poetry, personal testimony, rap and performance. Tellingly, however, seventeen PBS stations refused to air the film even though it had previously been approved and included in program schedules at a number

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of stations. This chapter begins to reveal contradictions in social space and attempts to use different methods to reveal what has been overlooked or silenced.

[2] Lefebvre (1978) explains that space is never removed from politics or ideologies; "If space has an air of neutrality and indifference with regard to its contents… it is precisely because it has already been occupied and used, and has already been the focus of past processes whose traces are not always evident in the landscape" (pg. 31).

Dialectical Method

The term "dialectics" is often absent from postmodern vocabulary and, as a research method, is equally absent from qualitative research texts[3]. Linked to Socrates, Kant, Hegel and Marx, the dialectical approach is generally understood as a single logocentric practice synonymous with closed, essentialist and totalizing approaches. If we look past this epitaph, draw from Lefebvre and situate the dialectical approach within a postmodern framework, we can begin to take up the dialectic as the *movement of knowledge* (Lefebvre 1968) which offers rich and complex potential for interpretive research. My itinerary here is to look at dialectical thinking as both a research method and methodology. Before setting out, however, it will be helpful to trace some of the dimensions of dialectical thinking.

The dialectical method is the study of internal contradictions. Steinar Kvale outlines that, within a dialectical approach, there is "the fundamental assumption that the contradictions of material and economic life are the basis of social relations and of consciousness" (1996:55). Although there are many meanings or traditions of dialectics, what is common to almost all is the view that conflict, antagonism, or contradiction is a necessary condition for producing new knowledge and by extension social change. Shields, who has written extensively on Lefebvre's dialectical approach, summarizes dialectical logic as "focusing on the relationships between elements and the process by which new states of affairs arise out of deep contradictions in the status quo" (1999:109). Lefebvre's dialectics investigates contradictions as moments of possibility or becoming. It is this dialectical notion of transcending difference by creating something new that remains at the core of Lefebvrean spatial theory.

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[3] The dialectical approach has often been limited to philosophical writings on the dialectical social theory of Jean Paul Sartre, to political economy or to other classical critical theorists such as the writings of Hegel and Marx. In searching through recent qualitative research texts (such as Denzin & Lincon 1998; Creswell 1998; Flick 1998 among others) dialectical materialism is noticeably absent as a methodology. The exception, however, is found in Steinar Kvale's (1996) text InterViews which accurately states that "the philosophical implications of the mode of understanding in qualitative interviews have seldom been addressed" (38). Kvale proceeds to outline four philosophical lines of thought and detail how these approaches can be used to analyze interviews. These approaches include: postmodern thought; hermeneutics; phenomenology; and dialectics. Of the four methods outlined the dialectical approach is the least well developed. To outline the dialectical approach Kvale focuses on Sartre's text The Problem of Method and neglects to include Henri Lefebvre's (1968) book entitled Dialectical Materialism which was the first text devoted exclusively to detailing the dialectical approach.

In 1939, Lefebvre wrote Dialectical Materialism[4] which was the first text devoted entirely to the dialectical approach and which attempted to move the dialectic into concrete social analysis (Shields 1999). In this text, Lefebvre effectively took the dialectic from "the old sense of the term: to imprecise argument and to the games of the sophist or the advocate" (1968:25), and reworked the dialectic to take on new meaning. After years of relative obscurity in English-speaking academia, Lefebvre is increasingly being recognized as a philosopher of dialectics.

Marx[5] developed dialectical materialism as a general method but did not rigorously apply it to more than a limited number of fields. Consequently, political scientist James Farr maintains that too often Marx's dialectical approach is reduced to

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[4] Dialectical Materialism was Lefebvre's most translated and best-known work yet was not translated into English until 1968 (Shield 1999).

[5] Marx undertook a critical examination of Hegelianism which led him (in collaboration with Engels) to dialectical materialism. Lefebvre writes that the "theoretical and philosophical origins of dialectical materialism are to be found not in Hegel's Logics but in his Phenomonology" (Lefebvre 1968:61).

> simple-minded slogans and juvenile formalisms. 'Thesis-antithesis-synthesis' – 'to speak Greek', Marx sneered – was merely the most notorious of these slogans. This *Readers Digest* version of the dialectic was fraught with philosophical ambiguities and reduced the dialectic to 'wooden trichotomies' (1987:223).

Acutely aware of these limitations, Lefebvre called for others to "re-read Marx with fresh eyes" (1968:17) and inaugurated dialectical materialism as a universal method. Tracing the dialectical method to Marx at the time when he was beginning to work on the Critique of Political Economy (1859) and Capital (1867), Lefebvre argued that the "dialectic method thus came to be added to historical materialism and the analysis of the economic content" (Lefebvre 1968:85). However, Lefebvre extended the boundaries of the dialectical method as he felt it was more viable when united with a "more elaborate materialism" (1968:84). Lefebvre was emphatic that any social analysis premised entirely on economic content (no matter how intricate the analysis) was in fact overly simplistic. He described economic content as the "simplest relations" which should be considered as 'moments' or fragments within larger complex relationships (1968:85). In a statement that articulates the main distinction between a Marxist anaylsis and his own, Lefebvre argues that "[d]ialectical materialism is not an economism. It analyzes relations and then reintegrates them into the total movement" (1968:85).

The Spatialized Dialectic

Traditionally dialectical processes follow a three-step sequence and each of the three moments of dialectical understanding are often given different terms[6]. Most often, the three stages have been characterized as thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Rob Shields, like James Farr, is also attentive to the fact that neither Marx nor Hegel used these terms ('thesis, antithesis, synthesis'). Rather Marx adopted the term 'affirmation, negation and negation of the negation'. In taking up Lefebvre's appeal to spatialize the dialectic, Shields reformulates the dialectic as "**affirmation-negation-otherness**" (1999:152). At this point I want to pause to clarify that it is not my intent to provide an ABC's of dialectics or in any way to limit it to a "three step program". A dialectical approach must remain open and flexible and it is imperative that these terms do not become an overly schematicized code that fails to allow for the richness of dialectical thought and movement.

Affirmation-Negation-Otherness: A Postmodern Form

Lefebvre advocates the spatialization of critical theory and infused a spatial imagination into Hegel and Marx's dialectic, which was too predicated on completeness and temporal sequencing (Soja 1996). Lefebvre insisted that to examine the specificity of spatializations, it was necessary to reimagine the dialectic from 'affirmation-negation-negation of the negation' to 'affirmation-negation-otherness'. This 'otherness' was literally to be "constitutively distinct" from the original pairing, creating a new triadic form (Shields 1999:152). The essence of his approach is the elimination of conceptual dualisms that were closed to new, unanticipated possibilities. He called this approach "une dialectique de triplicite" or a three-way dialectic (Shields 1999:120). This triadic form, which respatializes the dialectic by disrupting the linear motion of affirmation-negation with a "radical 'outside', a 'beyond', or otherness" reflects a postmodern approach (Shields 1999:152).

Edward Soja's (1996) Thirdspace provides the most comprehensive guide to Lefebvre's three-way dialectic and extends it as a critical strategy called '*trialectics*'. Soja acknowledges that the 'trialectic' formulation, although heavily embedded within Lefebvre's writing, particularly The Production of Space, is never clearly extrapolated for the reader. In a chapter entitled "The Trialectics of Spatiality" Soja unpacks this triple consciousness with an approach called *thirding-as-Othering.*

> Whenever faced with a binary opposition Lefebvre fractured them by introducing an-Other term, a third possibility or 'moment' that partakes of the original pairing but is not just a simple combination or an 'in between' position along some all-inclusive continuum. This critical thirding-as-Othering is the first and most important step in transforming the categorical and closed logic of either/or to the dialectically open logic of both/and also… (Soja 1996:60).

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[6] The three terms have also been referred to variously as (1) nature; (2) negation, reflection, and understanding; and (3) self-conscious or absolute knowledge (negation of the negation) – or as the individual, particular, and universal moments of knowledge (Ring 1987:762).

This strategy enables an inquiry that disorders and disrupts what is already 'fixed' and as such each thirding or trialectic[7] is radically open to otherness and to a continuing critique and expansion of spatial knowledge.

Thinking trialectically does not however mean that contradictions will be resolved or even that Thirdspace will provide solutions. Soja asserts that

> [t]he "third" term – and Thirdspace as a concept – is not sanctified in and of itself. The critique is not meant to stop at three, to construct a holy trinity, but to build further, to move on, to continuously expand the production of knowledge beyond what is presently known (1996:61).

Lefebvre (1968) also specified that this privileging of uncertainty is necessary to keep the spatial debate open to new formations and different possibilities. It remains necessary that Thirding does not result in a linear or tidy progression but in continuous *movement*, "punctuated by leaps, by sudden mutations and upheavals" (1968:44). Lefebvre's three dialectical determinations or trialectics provide the foundation of this chapter but I have only just begun to outline the potential this approach holds as a methodology. The significance of the dialectical approach lies in the multiple contradictions and innumerable potentialities contained within this approach. In the next section, I more clearly outline the basic framework of the dialectic.

Contradiction as both limit and possibility

The central feature of dialectical logic is contradiction. In Lefebvre, Love & Struggle, Shields (1999) argues that Lefebvre's dialectic emphasizes

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[7] Thinking trialectically is not about dismissing binaries entirely but is a "process of restructuring that draws selectively and strategically from the two opposing categories to open new alternatives" (Soja, 1996:5).

> the changeable quality of things as they encounter opposition … and are re-synthesized with those contradictory forces to become entirely new objects... In this model, *difference* is the central feature and is the creative force by which objects come into being (Shields 1999:117).

Drawing from Hegel's The Science of Logic, Lefebvre asserts that "[e]very determinate existence is a relation" (1968:34). Therefore, the first process requires that the relation between the two contradictory terms is lucidly established. It is the movement between the two terms that brings the conflict to light or, stated another way, it is *contradiction* that produces both limits and possibilities. Lefebvre states that contradiction or movement has an antagonistic structure which in fact "transcends opposition by creating something new" (1968:32). The first term is necessarily related to another. The second term "negates, makes manifest and completes the first term by expressing its one-sidedness" (Lefebvre 1968:34). The first term may imply unity but the second term negates or reveals the one-sidedness of the first term.

Lefebvre is careful to delineate that "the two terms act and react on each other; to call a halt is impossible. The Third term encompasses the contradiction of both terms, uprooting them from any …definite meaning" (1968:38). In other words, the Third term both unites and transcends the contradictions at the same time that it preserves what was determinate in them. An example that situates the dialectic in the production of space and which underpins Lefebvre's spatial imagination is the notion of lived social space or the trialectics of spatiality. The trialectics of spatiality involve material forms or real space and conceived or imagined space which together constitute lived social space. These three spatialities are distinct from one another yet are reciprocally determined; they are 'ends', one of the other but they are ends without finality. Each of these spatialities first must be considered in itself, then their differences can be transcended by the Third term (social space or Thirdspace), which is founded on contradiction.

Social space captures each of these relations by asserting that both real and imagined spatialities are relative and provisional. Therefore, lived social space must be understood as partial, fragmented and most importantly as open to possibility. It is this Thirding that has been carried directly through the works of Edward Soja (1996) and Rob Shields (1999) and whose logic surfaces in the writings of bell hooks (1990), Homi Bhabba (1989) and Radhika Mohanram (1999). Postcolonial critics, such as Bhabba and Mohanram, utilize a dialectical approach and move geography into the centre of inquiry. As Rob Shields (1999) highlights, several others such as Edward Said (1978, 1994) and Gloria Anzaldúa's (1991) work on 'bordercrossing' provides examples of formulations of 'affirmation-negation-otherness'.

Why Dialectics?

Three-part dialectics enable the examination of space in terms of its social production as a particular kind of space. This provides, for example, the possibility to piece together narratives outside of "official" histories. Said and Anzaldúa are among those that trace out alternative histories that lie buried in the dominant discourse. These works seek to understand the dialectical interaction between spatial arrangements and social organization itself. One of the most important aspects of dialectical logic is that one-sidedness is prevented. Within a dialectical approach every 'reality' or thought must be taken as a "moment" in the dialectical sense of the word. Lefebvre warns that "[t]aken in isolation these moments become unthinkable…we cannot see how they are formed or take up their place in the whole" (1968:36). In other words, dialectics seeks to restore movement. Lefebvre writes the following on contradictory moments:

> [a]ll the contradictions of the world (in which, as soon as thought accepts contradiction instead of excluding it, everything manifests itself as if polarized, contradictory and fluid), all beings therefore and all assertions, together with their relations, interdependencies and interactions, are grasped in the total movement of the content, each in its own place, at its own 'moment' … Partial truths, finite determinations and limited assertions turn into errors when they claim to be definitive and attempt to erect themselves above the movement. Understood relatively and reintegrated into the total movement, every finite determination is true…The understanding is a movement within the movement: it asserts, posits, negates and analyses (1968:36-37).

For Lefebvre contradiction is to be found everywhere (or everyplace) and these contradictions are dialectical "moments" which, to paraphrase Lefebvre, obligate us to move from a position or understanding we had hoped was definitive to take account of something further, thereby denying our original assertion (1968:31). By thinking through these "moments" or contradictions I can begin to unpack the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners. Using Lefebvre's dialectical approach enables me to *problematize* the social space, which is often taken-for-granted as mundane or banal, and begin to expose its contradictions as well as tease out its hidden potentialities. Herein lies the richness of the dialectical approach as it takes the realm of the ordinary and demonstrates the ways in which this space is *extra*ordinary.

Material Adoptions and Feminist-Postmodern Adaptations

At this point I have loosely mapped out a dialectical approach based on Lefebvre's spatialized dialectic but I must make a few more methodological moves before I can begin to facilitate my analysis of the social space of the Frontrunners. Earlier in this chapter I outlined the way in which the dialectical approach is not confined to socio-economic or social structural explanations, but remains a means to elevate our understanding of the ordinary to the status of critical knowledge. A materialist approach that remains tied to linear and teleological history is not enough to move towards the recognition of the importance of space in general, microgeographies in particular, nor the political nature of the everyday deeply structured by multiple relations of power. While Lefebvre did not endorse the teleological assumptions of orthodox Marxism, it is important to note that he refused to write off materialism as an intellectual method. Soja explains that the generative source for a materialist interpretation of spatiality "is the recognition that spatiality is socially produced and, like society itself, exists in both substantial forms (concrete spatialities) and as a set of relations between individuals and groups, an 'embodiment' and medium of social life itself" (1989:120). Thus the dialectical approach that I adapt for this project is informed by both material spaces and the processes by which the spatial practice of meaning-making shapes cultural lives.

It is also important to note that Lefebvre's work, although directed towards socially transformative struggles, was not grounded in a feminist appraisal of power and that his work is silent around issues of race. Nonetheless, as feminist researcher Patti Lather (1991) asserts, it is necessary to reposition and supplement theory in ways that contribute to more emancipatory ways of generating social knowledge. In this light, it is important to foreground the ways in which a feminist-postmodern approach both parallels and interrupts Lefebvre's dialectical inquiry. In the section that follows I unpack the assumptions and assertions within which I employ the dialectical method in this project.

Lather (1991) states that theory "is too often used to protect us from the awesome complexity of the world"(62). Postmodern knowledge production, which itself manifests in numerous forms, is premised on the idea that life is too complex and contradictory to be captured in universal systems of thought. Joan Scott explains that postmodern approaches undermine "claims for authority based on totalizing explanations, essentialized categories of analysis "be they human nature, race, class, sex, or 'the oppressed'" (cited in Barrett 1999:27). The theoretical refusal of the construction of monolithic and universal categories works to confront what Kirsh refers to as an "increasingly fragmented and purposely divided society" (2000:20). A postmodern theoretical framework is one that incorporates 'pieces', works within a multiplicity of meanings, and emphasizes partiality and plurality in attempts to understand what Lather calls the "interactive complexity, shifting centered, and multi-sited constructedness of our selves and our worlds" (1991:21).

By adopting a feminist-postmodern approach within a dialectical framework, I can move beyond a structural model and deliberate and reflect on the unruly and uncontainable excesses that accompany the production of spaces, bodies and meanings. Lather's work, particularly in Getting Smart (1991) and Troubling The Angels: Women Living With HIV/AIDS (co-authored with Chris Smithies 1997), is instructive here as her inquiry is focused on feminist research and the ways in which postmodern approaches problematize the clear interpretations and methods that frame research. Lather asserts that method, interpretation and analysis must allow for the partiality and plurality of voices as we live in "worlds full of paradox and uncertainty where close inspection turns unities into multiplicities, clarities into ambiguities, univocal simplicities into polyvocal complexities" (1991:xvi). A postmodern approach, as outlined by Lather, struggles against interpretations free of contradictions and coherent unity. This echoes Lefebvre's (1968) statement that, "unity is a modernist notion, it is contradiction that propels movement" (pg. 110). Read through Lather and Lefebvre, postmodern and dialectical approaches clearly parallel one another. Both approaches displace expectations of linearity, unification and closure, which is necessarily different from hermeneutical canons of interpretation which strive to obtain "a valid and common understanding of the meaning of the text" (Kvale 1996:46).

I flush out the textual strategies utilized for integrating the interview data in a later section of this chapter. First, however, I must address the other half of the hyphenated "feminist-postmodern" approach. In particular, there is one broad area of overlap between feminist methodological orientations and the dialectical method that I want to address here. However, since feminism is a rather elastic word, which has been stretched in different directions, it is necessary to clarify how it informs the research process in this project. Lather answers the question 'what is feminist research?' by stating that, "[v]ery simply, to do feminist research is to put the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry" (1991:71). However, gender is not the sole organizing principle that shapes the conditions and spaces of our lives and as such feminist inquiry must also examine the multiple ways that culture informs and locates social subjectivities. This means that feminist inquiry must also examine the ways in which race and sexuality are inextricably tied to spatial configuration.

The significant parallel between feminist research and a dialectical approach can be teased out of the following statement by Lefebvre. I am painfully aware of the way in which women are excluded from Lefebvre's writing, as demonstrated in the quotation that follows, but nonetheless want to flush out the ways these two approaches overlap and each attempt to mend the fissure between theory and practice. Lefebvre writes:

> [t]he effort of the philosopher does not and cannot stay on an isolated philosophical level, in a separate consciousness, sphere or dimension; the source of his theories is social practice, and he must direct them back towards life, be it through his teaching or by other means (poetry? Literature?). Dialectical thought can and must transform itself into dialectical consciousness of life, in life: unity of the mediate and the immediate, of the abstract and the concrete, of culture and natural spontaneity. In this way it will pass from ideology and specific knowledge into culture, language, perhaps into direct perception of the world – in any event, into everyday life (cited in Gardiner 2000:207).

Lefebvre's work was resolutely focused on the conditions of everyday life[8] and explored ways to remove social barriers that limited meaningful individual and collective action. Lefebvre insisted that theory not remain abstracted from the everyday but rather must be translated into social action (Shields 1999). Despite the proliferation of feminisms that circulate in contemporary social theory, it also remains difficult to divorce feminist research from a political project that includes, as an integral dimension, a vision of change (Barrett 1999; Lather 1991). As Lather (1991) argues in her work, the ultimate aim of feminist research is action in the everyday world.

Social change is a concept that clearly resonates and reflects an organic link between the dialectical method and feminist research. The point of articulation between these two approaches is found in the notion of *praxis*. Lefebvre's advocating of concrete material action in the social world developed out of a Marxist notion of 'praxis'. For Lefebvre:

> [p]raxis is where dialectical materialism both starts and finishes. The word itself denotes, in philosophical terms, what common sense refers to as 'real life', that life which is at once more prosaic and more dramatic than that of the speculative intellect. ...Its [dialectical materialisms] theoretical aim and its practical aim – knowledge and creative action – cannot be separated (Lefebvre 1968:112).

Echoes of Lefebvre's notion of praxis can be heard in the following statement by Lather, as she ties praxis to feminist research: "[t]he requirements of praxis are theory both relevant to the world and nurtured by actions in it, and an action component in its own theorizing process that grows out of practical political grounding" (1991:11-12). Lather's aim is to make theory, method and praxis inseparable from one another and as such the praxis that Lather articulates involves "[a]t its simplest…a call for critical inquirers to practice in their empirical endeavors what they preach in their theoretical formulations" (1991:172n). Returning to Lefebvre, Shields explains that for Lefebvre "*praxis* is the means of maintaining within oneself the fluid potentiality of 'becoming' while at the same time creating a stable world" (1999:61). This notion of praxis, within a dialectical and feminist methodological approach, is the raison d'être for this investigation, as it situates lived social space as the terrain of struggle. The feminist potential inherent in this notion of spatial praxis lies in examining those who fashion a spatial presence and practice outside the norms of the prevailing and often enforced social spatialisation. The spaces and contradictions highlighted in this dissertation therefore must be understood as a "living relation, experienced in existence" (Lefebvre 1968:105). In other words, this project explores how nonhegemonic social groups perceive and use urban space and the ways in which queer runners are embodied, placed and often displaced in (queer) sporting spaces.

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[8] Shields explains that "[E]veryday life is a collection of things and activities that are repetitive and banal...The term 'everyday life' in Lefebvre's books means 'banal and meaningless life', not

Participants and Data Collection

The International Front Runners Webpage [**http://www.frontrunners.org/**] provides a current listing of Frontrunner clubs and contains links to websites belonging to individual clubs. My initial contact with the Toronto Frontrunners executive was made through the IFR webpage. I

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daily life" (1999:69). The concept of everyday life will be addressed in greater detail in chapter 4.

contacted the TFR club president via email and explained that I wished to interview members of the Toronto club in order to explore the ways in which a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered running club formed a particular place and social space for 'queer' runners. I also stated that, although there is a very small Frontrunners club in Edmonton, Alberta that I was interested in working with a larger and more diverse group of runners. My request was then considered and approved by the Frontrunners executive at a monthly meeting.

At my first Saturday run with the TRF, it was announced, during the pre-run announcements and organizing, that I was a graduate student interested in interviewing members of the group for my dissertation. At this time an invitation was extended for those who were interested to contact me, or other members of the executive, for more information. An advertisement was also posted in the Frontrunners newsletter that invited interested runners to contact me. During the first month of my field work several people expressed interest in participating in the project. Interested participants were given an information letter (see Appendix 1) which explained that participants would be invited to take part in up to three interviews over a three month period. In addition, a few people, particularly members of the executive, recommended that other runners, who had been involved with the FR since their inception and could provide some historical context, be included in the project.

Data for this project was collected during a 14-week period (September to December 2000). The Toronto Frontrunners are the largest Frontrunners group in Canada, and at the time of my interviews had 91 registered members. Yet, in

Canada's largest G/L/B/T running club there were only nine women who registered with the club. One of the reasons that I had initially selected Toronto as the site for this study was to reflect a more complex demographic with a multiplicity of sexual, racial and class identities (as was my experience with the Rainbow Hoops Basketball league). The weekly runs held by the Frontrunners regularly drew anywhere between 30-50 runners yet there were never more than 2 women at any of the runs held during my field work. The majority of the runners were white gay men who were quite competitive runners. Initially I had wanted to interview a small number of runners (I had anticipated interviewing six participants) and interview each participant up to three times. This would, for example, allow me to work with a relatively small number of participants and conduct a more in-depth exploration into 'spaces of difference' and the particular issues facing gay, lesbian, transgendered and bisexual runners. However, since the group presented as relatively homogenous in terms of its whiteness, relative affluence, the few lesbians or runners identifying as bisexual, and the absence of transgendered bodies all together, I decided to interview more widely with the intent of unpacking how the social space of the Frontrunners was produced as a particular kind of space.

As there were few lesbian runners active in the club, it was more difficult to find female participants for this project. In an attempt to include more women in the interview process, I asked some of the study participants to recommend other women runners who were affiliated with the Frontrunners and who might be willing to be included in the interviews. This brought one more woman, a runner named Diane, into the project, who, although she had run with a previous running club and trained for long races, only ran with the Frontrunners once. I included Diane in the project because, as someone who chose not to run with the Frontrunners, she could provide a much different account. She was contacted through a current member of the FR, agreed to be interviewed and was included as a participant.

In the end twelve people, eight men and four women, were selected for interviewing. The interviews were not meant to be exhaustive nor to be representative of the entire group; rather, in keeping with the dialectical method, the purpose of the interviews was to provide a complex and contradictory account of the social space of the Frontrunners. All of the interviews were tape-recorded and each lasted between 1 – 2 hours. Each completed interview was fully transcribed before I met with another Frontrunner and began another interview. In the transcription process, pseudonyms were given to each participant as outlined in the information letter and consent form signed by each participant. Many of the interviews took place with individuals after I had been running with the club for several weeks. During this time I had several discussions with some of the runners, either during runs or at coffee afterwards, about the project. As a result, narrators often discussed different aspects of the running club, Church Street or local happenings, which provided new contexts for the interview and the prepared questions that I used as a loose guide to format the interview. In a few cases the taped interview ended, and while continuing to talk informally we would again return to taping as we discussed a topic of relevance to either the running club or an event in the gay village. Not all of the data from the interviews has been thoroughly exhausted in the analysis and there are still areas that could be expanded.

In the following table I have listed the pseudonyms given to each of the runners and have included their occupations. At a quick glance, this information shows some basic demographic information that will be discussed more substantially in the remaining chapters. The participants ranged in age from 27-44 years.

Table 1: List of Participants

Name	**Occupation**
Colleen	Administrator/Manager
Sonya	Business Owner
Ramona	Teacher/Educator
Ethan	Consultant
Michael	Information Technology
Brad	Counselor
Andy	Administrator/Manager
Mark	Administrator/Manager
James	Researcher
Diane	Publisher/Editor
Richard	Computer Prog/Analyst
Sean	Marketing

Returning to Method: The interpretive crisis in ethnographic research

Most of this chapter is devoted to outlining the theoretical and conceptual framing of my inquiry, in other words methodology. However, the methods that I engage also organize my analysis within this project and inform what Norman Denzin (1998) calls the "art and politics" of interpretation. What is now referred to as the "interpretive crisis" of ethnography reveals the ways in which interpretation is an art rather than a formulaic or mechanical process (Denzin

1998). For example, as the writer of this text I make decisions about what will be written, what gets included and what remains absent in the text, how it will be represented and so on. I also make decisions about the ways I write myself into the text, mindful of Lather's (1997) words that while "giving voice" to other people's stories the researcher then goes about both getting in and out of the way of those stories.

Traditionally, the ethnographic enterprise has been about "presenting, explaining and analyzing the culture(s) which locate(s) experience" (Willis & Trondman 2000:6). However, "post" debates (postmodern, poststructural and postcolonial) have challenged understandings of ethnographic authority and representation (Britzman 1995; Said 1994; Sparks 1995 & Sykes 1998). Lila Abu-Lughod argues that ethnographies run the risk of presenting "something object-like, coherent, whole and separate from ourselves" (2000:262). The writing up of ethnographic work is not innocent. Often work on 'Other' cultures are authorized and written through racist, homophobic and eurocentric structures of power. For example, Said (1994) explains in Culture and Imperialism, that while his focus in the book remains on the struggle over geography that "the struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, forms, about images and imaginings" (pg. 7). Said's work reveals how narrative practices are regulatory fictions that produce and police particular interpretations and identities.

Deborah Britzman also questions representation and the politics of recounting in interpretive work. She argues that traditional ethnographies present to the reader "noncontradictory subjects who say what they mean and mean what they say" (Britzman 1995:230). For Britzman ethnographies are not about capturing the "real" but are about constructing particular versions of truth. Britzman asserts that all narratives are provisional, nonunitary, and situated. She argues that:

> [e]thnographic narratives should trace how power circulates and surprises, theorize how subjects spring from the discourses that incite them, and question the belief in representation even as one must practice representation as a way to intervene critically in the constitutive constraints of discourses (Britzman 1995:236).

Insisting on a tentative rather than authoritative voice in representing ethnographic data, Lather (2000) theorizes the concept of "getting lost" as a methodological stance in ethnographic research. This 'getting lost' involves remaining open to the inconclusiveness of our work rather than presenting a single and dominant point of view. By abdicating "an axiomatic attitude to representation" and by endorsing a "problematic attitude" (2000:2), Lather explores ways to disrupt interpretive mastery. By struggling against dominant conventions of ethnographic writing, Lather maintains that ethnographies can offer a more complicated version of how life is lived.

Denzin argues that "[o]ne learns about method by thinking about how one makes sense of one's own life" (1998:315). This "making sense" of one's life is never done in a linear or uncomplicated way. Similarly, this project engages in a variety of methods and is grounded in the assumption that we fashion meaning and interpretation in numerous ways. Just as a subtle and detailed understanding of the complexity of social space relies on several techniques for gathering 'evidence', this project uses a variety of methods including participant observation, interview transcripts, and a wide range of texts such as minutes from Frontrunner meetings, newsletters, newspapers, maps, and cyberspace. In negotiating this range of material, I continue to engage in a dialectical process, flushing out contradictions that serve as critical 'moments' in the spatial ordering of difference.

In order to emphasis the plurality of diverging interpretations, my methods and writing attempt to "crystallize" rather than triangulate (Richardson 1998, 2000). Triangulation, in traditionally staged research, is the use of multiple methods in an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the topic (Denzin & Lincoln 1998b). Laurel Richardson argues that triangulation assumes "that there is a fixed point or object that can be triangulated" (2000:13). Crystallization, a term coined by Richardson, is a "postmodernist deconstruction of *triangulation*" (2000:13) which does not assume a rigid or fixed 'object' of study. Crystallization rejects the idea that there is some 'truth' that can be validated or fully known and draws on the imagery of a crystal as the central imagery for validity. Crystals retains a form and a structure but are multidimensional and can cast and reflect light in multiple directions. Richardson argues that researchers who create postmodernist texts 'crystallize', which provides "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic" (2000:14).

Richardson (1998, 2000) also argues that how we are expected to write affects what we can write about[9]. In order to weave a text that captures the way in which multiple stories and experiences overlap, interact and disrupt one another, I must engage in creating my own situated version of social space. This process involves what Laurel Richardson calls "writing as a *method of inquiry*" (1998:345 [emphasis in original]). In other words, writing is not just about the "telling", it is, as Richardson explains, also a way of " 'knowing' – a method of discovery and analysis. By writing in different ways, we discover new aspects of our topic and our relationship to it. Form and content are inseparable" (Richardson 1998:345). In order to examine the social organization of space within the Frontrunners, I produce a 'messy text', which attempts to "reflexively map multiple discourses that occur in a given social space"(Denzin 1997:xvii). In order to do this, the remainder of this dissertation wanders from prescribed writing formats. The following section outlines the writing strategies employed in the remaining sections.

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[9] Yet it is important to also note that "the actual conduct and writing of ethnographic research remains relatively untouched by the epistemological upheavals of blurred genres, the crisis of

Writing as Inquiry - Dialectical Interpretations of (Interview) Texts

> "*How* to write about the social world is of fundamental importance to our own and others' interpretations of it" (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995:255).

As methodological suggestions for how to carry out dialectical analysis for interview research remain limited, determining how to engage the 'data' presented several challenges. Beginning with the premise that the interpretation of interview texts will uncover multiple contradictions, it is essential that the procedure for analyzing data remain flexible. Lather (1991) argues that "[D]ata must be allowed to generate propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use

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representation or postmodernism…A vast number of empirical monographs and journal papers remain 'remarkably untouched'" (Atkinson & Coffey 1999: 470).

of a priori theoretical frameworks, but which keeps a particular framework from becoming the container into which data must be poured" (pg. 62). Therefore the interpretation of texts must also offer multiple ways of thinking about space and allow for the accumulation and layering of meaning, revealing the vast complexities that exist within social space. As a result, I do not attempt to create a coherent story or narrative as much as work to recontextualize selected statements within broader frames of reference (Kvale 1996).

Starting with the assumption that there can never be a final or accurate representation of social space, only different representations of different experiences, I seek to understand how power and ideology operate through and in space and the way in which race, class, and gender in addition to sexuality work to create a particular kind of space within the Toronto Frontrunners. I have already outlined that dialectical analysis attempts to hold multiple understandings and contradictions, together with their relations, interdependencies and interactions and how they are grasped in *place*. These contradictions can be traced through the narratives of the Frontrunners, which are always unfolding and incomplete and need to be understood as 'taking up a place in the whole'. As such, the specific contradictions within texts will be interpreted, at instances in relation to the individual, but with the majority of the focus emphasizing local spaces, multiple meanings and experiences in space, and the ways in which knowledge is validated through spatial practice. This involves a spatial reading of economic, social, cultural and political aspects of particular spaces and the contradictions generated in everyday life situations.

Lefebvre argues that the dialectical method “permits the analysis of particularities and specific situations” (1968:104). In order to analyze the social space of the Frontrunners I must create a text where experiences and events, which initially appear to be incompatible, are dialectically framed. In other words, I must create a text that permits the analysis of situations that at first glance do not appear to belong together on the same page. I am not attempting to make assumptions about causality; rather, I am arguing that, in order to gain a partial understanding of the social space of the Frontrunners, it is necessary to read with and against the cultural background. Reading the cultural background serves to accentuate the contradictions and frame the political and strategic uses of space. For example, the gay village is one obvious piece of the lived everyday world of the runners, as the runs both begin and end in the village. In order to discuss the different experiences of members of the TFR, I must consider the complicated and multiple meanings that the village has for individuals and trouble taken-for-granted ways of understanding that particular space.

By moving through and across different layers of space, I hope to creatively ‘disrupt’ simple readings of space. Just as postmodern art and architecture are characterized by the deliberate blending of purposes, the text I am creating here has, as one of its purposes, the intent of proliferating rather than diminishing meaning (Lather 1991). Our social lives and spatial practices are rooted in a complex array of historical and cultural specificities that, when situated in relation to lived experience, reveal the contradictory and strategic uses of space. Drawing heavily from Lather and Smithies (1997), I write making room for the excesses that spill over from fixed reference points of texts to enlarge the understandabilty, complexity, and contradictions that are spatially inscribed. This 'making room' is done via *intertextuality*, which Lather (1991) uses as a strategy to literally surround one text with other texts and provide a glimpse at the vast complexities at play. Borrowing from this strategy, I also multiply the layers of meaning by providing text that 'interrupts' and provides counterstories to the narrative that I write. For example, while I was collecting data for this project, there was a police raid on 'The Pussy Palace', a women's bathhouse in Toronto. The raid made international news as five male police officers entered the 'women's only' space under the pretense of investigating a liquor license violation. The officers then spent two hours interrogating women who were in various stages of undress. In the end, charges where brought against members of the Toronto Women's Bathhouse committee. The raid provided a powerful backdrop to this project and highlighted the ways in which social power is reflected through the control of space. Information on the bathhouse raid is included in order to complicate understandings of the ways in which sexual minorities create, access and use space. Although seemingly disconnected from the Frontrunners, this 'interruption' troubles any easy sense of what 'queer space' means to sexual dissidents and puts into play a more complex context for understanding social space. In dialectical fashion, this format also emphasizes the movement of knowledge that can only be partially captured on a page.

Lather and Smithies (1997) explain the struggle to enact a style of writing that troubles any easy sense of what it means for the women living with AIDS whose stories are shared in Troubling the Angels:

> [t]rying to find a form that enacts that there is never a single story and that no story stands still, we practice a kind of dispersal and forced mobility of attention by putting into play simultaneously multiple stories that fold in and back on one another. This raises for readers questions about bodies, places and times, disrupting comfort spaces of thinking and knowing (1997:220).

Lather and Smithies recognize the "inevitable interpretive weight of a researcher telling data stories" (1997:34). In an effort to find a way of writing that didn't "smother" the women's stories with their own commentary but that still drew the reader into recognizing the simultaneously multiple stories and layering of information that characterizes the AIDS crisis, Lather and Smithies used a split text format. This format disrupts the linear unfolding of information and the sense of the researcher working out all the kinks and contradictions that surface during the project.

Although I had not read Lather's work until I had completed the interviews, it was abundantly clear to me that only using interview narratives would be an exceptionally closed way of examining the complex matrixes of space that anchor the unstable and complex experiences of gay and lesbian runners. Lather's work provides a methodologically grounded, feminist poststructuralist register that makes room for dialogue within dialogue. Drawing from this format, I also stitch together discontinuous pieces of information that require that one linger, shift positions and reach outside of the "main text" and move through multiple layers of meaning that trouble any simple mapping of social space. Scattered through the remaining pages are "text boxes", which contain information from outside sources such as newspaper articles or archival material that variously report "facts" and events. These are to provide counterspaces to the narrative, to break the reader off into a different direction, if only momentarily, and to, in some instances, highlight contradictions that exist within lived social space. Finally, at the bottom of selected pages I also make space for my own commentary, where I include some of my own observations and experiences of the social space of the running club, reflect on the interview process, being in the gay village, my own awareness of the fragility of queer social space and the research process. All of these sections are visibly separated, as it is not my intention for this project to read as a seamless text. I am more interested in showing the fractures and fissures of this work and of the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners.

I set off now into a text that resembles a maze with several paths, each leading in a different direction. The topic that will initially lead the way is the gay village, the space from which the Frontrunners gather. However, I turn momentarily back to the writing of Jeanette Winterson in Written on the Body as providing a way into and out of the remaining analysis:

> [t]he hard-bounded space hides the vulnerable self… I can't enter you in clothes that won't show the stains, my hands full of tools to record and analyze. If I come to you with a torch and a notebook, a medical diagram and a cloth to mop up the mess, I'll have you bagged neat and tidy. I'll store you in plastic like chicken livers. Womb, gut, brain neatly labeled and returned. Is that how you know another human being? (1992:120)

The Gay Ghetto: Images of the Street

Toronto is the largest city in Canada[10]. Toronto's gay village is one of the worlds largest and is considered by many to be a "mecca" for Canadian queers, dubbed by Fodors as "among the world's favorite gay urban destinations"(Chasen 1987:45). The gay village is located in the core of the downtown district and is easily identified with rainbow flags and banners hanging from light standards. These flags have become fixtures in the ghetto and clearly mark out the space in a highly visible fashion. It is estimated that there are over 250,000 people who live in the gay village (see map in Appendix 2). However, the cost of rent is prohibitive for many, particularly lesbians who often live in areas outside of the downtown were there are more housing options and affordable rent.

> The word *ghetto* originated in Italy as a term for the enclosed area where Jews were required not only to live but after a particular hour to *be* – as a means to prevent sexual intercourse with Christians. Thus part of the very name of this community suggests *alienation* and *segregation* (Lehman 1994:38 [emphasis in original]).

The main intersection of the village is Church and Wellesley. Discussing the symbolic importance of Church and Wellesley, Kyle Rae, an openly gay city councilor, explains that the corner is

> the heart and soul of the community – the beginning and the end. …It's an international symbol. I meet people in London, England and they've heard of Church and Wellesley. And yet the establishments are not

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[10] The 1996 Canadian Census lists the population of the metropolitan area of Toronto at 4,263,757 (Statistics Canada, 1996).

> particularly gay. A pharmacy, a bank and a chain cosmetics retail outlet mark the other three corners… Historically Church and Wellesley – it's always been the centre of the community, especially since The Steps opened… It's a destination for people (Collins 2000:13).

As noted by Rae, several of the businesses on Church Street, the commercial spine of the village, are traditional shops. There is Starbucks, Second Cup, Timothy's as well as other coffee shops, Baskin Robbins, a hardware store, several barbers, a butcher shop, drug store, and a few grocery stores. However, the main 'users' of these spaces are gays and lesbians who either live in or travel to the village. For example, "The Steps" are the stairs in front of the Second Cup on Church Street. The Second Cup, which opened in 1984, is one shop in a 5-storey commercial building called the Churwell Centre. The entire length of the Churwell building is covered with an arcade, which shelters the front entrance of all the shops. This design reflects the efforts of Toronto's Planning Department to develop a street-level orientation in the Church-Wellesley area for pedestrian activity. A report, released in 1981, although not naming the area as a "gay community", stated as an objective to "strengthen the retail function of the area, protect residential uses and enhance streetscape…providing a broad range of goods and services to the local community" (Lehman 1994:33). The covered steps have become a well known cruising and meeting spot, particularly for gay men, and are increasingly occupied by homeless youth. Activity on 'The Steps'[11] of the Churwell building is influenced, in part, by a design intended to "foster life on the street…even if it was not the kind of activity that the developers anticipated" (CLGA 2001a).

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[11] The following text is found on the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives alongside a photo of 'The Steps" and highlights some of the design changes that were implemented to limit the presence of gays. "It may not look like much, but these few risers fronting The Second Cup, opened in April 1984, have become famous as a communal stoop. 'The Steps' has been the setting (and the name) of a cartoon series in _Xtra_, segments on the CBC / HBO hit comedy *The Kids in the Hall*, and a meeting place impossible to miss. It's occupied 24 hours a day, most crowded in the wee hours. At first, Churwell's management didn't know what to make of this phenomenon. When people began plunking their butts on the planter walls, little

It's ironic that what is now the centre of the ghetto is an area that was know as "Molly Wood's Bush" in the early 19th century (when "Molly" was a colloquialism for homosexual). Alexander Wood, a prominent businessman and a magistrate, owned the undeveloped land (Berwick 1994a). In 1810, Wood was "discovered making sexual advances to young boys" and was "compelled to leave the country in social disgrace"
(Lehman 1994:30).

Mingled alongside the traditional businesses in the village is a leather boutique; several gay, lesbian and/or mixed gender bars; gay video and erotica stores; gay steam baths, an AIDS memorial, and several other gay-oriented shops. One of the landmark areas of the gay village is the 519 Community Centre and the small green space surrounding it called Cawthra Square Park. Owned and partially funded by the City of Toronto, the 519's programs reflect the needs of a diverse group of people with over 300 community groups accessing the 519 each year. Though not the only users of the community centre, the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community is the most active and visible members of the Centre [http://www.icomm.ca/the519/about/history.html].

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railings went up to discourage it. When the AIDS Committee of Toronto tried to rent space in 1987, they got a run- around. But now Churwell is happy to put out banners (there's one to the right of the rainbow flag) calling itself 'The Heart of the Village.'" Source: http://www.clga.ca/archives/what/papers/docs/toronto/cwcc.htm

Cawthra Square is a small park that has multiple uses and provides for very different experiences. Referred to as "Church Street Beach", during the summer months, it is a place where queers often go to sunbathe. Homeless people often occupy and sleep on the park's benches. For others, the park provides one of the few green spaces in the village, and is a prime dog-walking location. It is also the meeting place where the Frontrunners gather before the Saturday morning runs. Since 1984, Cawthra Park has been the site of Pride festivities. However, as Toronto's Pride has grown into a week-long event drawing an estimated one million people (making it one of the largest in North America, surpassing those of even much larger cities like New York and Los Angeles), the Park can no longer accommodate the entire event. After the annual Dyke March, a section of Cawthra Park is closed off to create a women's only space, a rare occurrence as gay men are the prime occupants of space within the gay village. Cawthra Park is also the location of the Toronto AIDS Memorial, which lists the names of those who have died as a result of AIDS. The memorial lists over 2,300 names. A poem, entitled "Cry", written by Michael Lynch, who has died of AIDS, is on a concrete pillar marking the entrance to the memorial. During each Pride Week, there is a Memorial Candlelight Vigil that often draws over a thousand people into the small park.

It is not my intention to construct the gay village as a "veritable gay theme park" (Bebout 2001). Rather, by outlining some of the aesthetic, commercial, residential, memorial and overtly sexual spaces of the gay village, I can then move to establish the strategic importance of the ghetto to wider theoretical questions about (homo)sexuality and space, and then fold these insights back into the social space of the Frontrunners. As a means of preventing what Soja (1997:2) calls the "epistemological privileging of the experience of the flaneur, the street wandering free agent of everyday life," I turn to examine how social and sexual identities are shaped and resisted through the lived social space of the gay village.

Often the mythology of the 1969 New York City Stonewall riots is mistakenly woven directly into the history of Toronto's gay village. However, as John Grube (1997) argues in his work on gay male space, the gay ghetto is a product of extensive and prolonged struggles. As a visible gay and lesbian community began to emerge in the early 1970s, public space in Toronto was often both the reason and site of encounters between police and the queer community.

> Mixed bars proliferated …offering (albeit with some adversity) a social gathering space to homosexuals for the first time. This new visibility (gays seeing each other socially on a regular basis) established a new sense of cultural identity. The Melody Room opened at 457 Church Street in 1965 and actively *encouraged* same-sex dancing through the use of a light triggered by the doorman alerting patrons to the arrival of police (Lehman 1994:31).

However, the spatial practices of sexually marginalized groups has produced and sustained queer space in very different ways. Becki Ross (1995) in, The House That Jill Built, examines the first lesbian-feminist group in Toronto, The Lesbian Organization of Toronto (LOOT), which was active from 1976 to

1980. LOOT acquired a house at 342 Jarvis Street, which provided a place where members met, organized, explored, played, loved, nurtured, and often policed a distinct lesbian identity[12]. LOOT flourished during a historical moment when lesbians, too often outnumbered and ignored in mixed organizations, formed spaces and groups of their own, separate and often separatist. Ross argues that "lesbian projects in the early-to-mid 1970s were founded almost entirely on the need to break down social isolation and to give and receive practical support in social settings" (1995:150). Ross' (1995) work is significant in that it discusses the ways in which largely white, middle-class lesbians created and accessed urban space in ways distinct from gay men. This is an important first step in highlighting gender and race in the geography of sexual marginality, which is noticeably absent from several inquiries into Toronto's gay village[13].

LOOT effectively became the headquarters of feminist activism in the late 1970s. LOOT members created a lived social space that enabled a range of social[14] and political[15] components that contributed to a counterspace. The ideologies of LOOT were clearly reflected in the housing efforts of lesbians in the 1970s, whereby

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[12] Ross reveals considerable disapproval for being involved in gay male politics, for 'selling out' and working a traditional job as these were seen as subverting the feminist movement. By highlighting some of the militant, political formations of the group, Ross reveals the ways in which LOOT members were often intolerant of differences and strove unsuccessfully for "unity" among lesbians.

[13] Anne-Marie Bouthillette's (1997) work on Commercial Drive in Vancouver provides a solid example of the production of lesbian enclaves and how these spaces are necessarily different from more commercial-oriented gay space.

[14] Some of the social needs were met through a lending library; Lesbian Bingos; potluck dinners; Sunday brunches; movie screenings; and sports, which were sporadically introduced and coordinated by LOOT members (Ross 1995).

[15] Direct action political components of LOOT included lobbying, education, letter writing, demonstrations, and coalition building (Ross 1995).

> lesbians secured group households as a double-edged tactic against rising rent costs *and* to concentrate lesbian cultural (and political) resources. These households also stood as (relatively) safe strongholds against the abusive actions of homophobic landowners. Unlike the emergence of gay-male residential and commercial district (the root of which stretched back to the 1940s), physical testaments to urban lesbian life were geographically disperse (Ross 1995:97).

At the same time that LOOT members strategically created and occupied space there were ever present reminders of the fragility and continued invisibility of lesbian space.

LOOT, according to Ross, was a space that provided access to a "lesbian-feminist haven" and that "became synonymous with nourishment and safety" (Ross 1995:205). One LOOT member explains "our greatest moments were surely the women-only coffeehouses, brunches and dances where we felt that thrill of making the lesbian house we created come alive, or of taking over a church hall and making it our own, if only for a night" (Ross 1995:204). Space, even when unstable or nomadic, enabled the existence of LOOT and provided a political linchpin in the power struggles of a group of lesbians. The above quotation captures the way in which the production of lesbian space is inherently political; even when that space is produced for relatively mundane uses such a coffeehouse or a dance. Without question, lesbians faced considerable restrictions in defining what and how space is occupied. However, as Ross notes the safe and supportive space produced by LOOT was not entirely inclusive as it was largely configured around whiteness, with working and middle-class members facing different economic and social challenges.

In August 1969 the Trudeau government passed amendments to the Canadian Criminal Code legalizing sex acts between members of the same sex over the age of 21.

Toronto 1979: Every 46 hours and eight minutes on average, a gay man was arrested and charged with a sexual offence. They were arrested in washrooms, at the bus terminal, in parks, in a cinema, in a parking garage and at the baths. They were arrested in their own homes (The Body Politic No. 61, March 1980).

The first organized police raid on a gay bathhouse, The Barracks, in Toronto's history occurred on December 29, 1979 resulting in the arrest of 28 gay men. The police used hammers and crowbars to smash in doors and pry open lockers. The police also seized the full membership list of The Barracks, consisting of some 800 names, as well as a number of membership cards. All of the arrested men we given compulsory VD tests at the police station. In response to this raid 400 people marched in front of Toronto City Hall (The Body Politic, Feb 1979, p12-13 no.50)

Addressing the development of spaces occupied by gay men, Grube (1992) argues that by 1980, gay men in Toronto had moved from a largely underground network, where the mentor/protégé couple played a significant role, to an above-ground more publicly oriented culture with its own newspapers, charitable organizations and recreation clubs. However, Grube (1997) maintains that public space, "has been, in effect, a battleground between the forces of homophobia and the state's apparatus for regulating sexual behaviour and the forces for gay communality and coalition building" (pg. 139). For example, when public space such as parks became known as cruising spots, it was common for underbrush to be chopped down and "morality lights" installed (Grube 1997). Toronto's gay bathhouses brought sexual activity from the city parks and public restrooms indoors where the primary function was to provide a safe place, free from harassment, for sexual and social interaction.

Toronto 1981: The BodyPolitic cover read **"Feb 5, Toronto: 150 Cops Smash Up The Baths – 286 Gay Men Busted"**.
At approximately 11 p.m. on Thursday, February 5, 150 police officers coordinated by police intelligence descended on four Toronto steambaths, arresting 266 men as found-ins in a common bawdy house, and 20 men as keepers... The city's health department will require the alleged keepers to undergo compulsory VD checks… the found-ins will be served with notices recommending VD tests.
In law, a common bawdy house can be anyplace 'resorted to for the purposes of prostitution or the practice of acts of indecency' – and cops have been using the vaguely worded statute to arrest gay men in bars, baths and private homes.
(The BodyPolitic No. 71/ March 1981)

Toronto's queer community's most visible and most recognized taking of public space occurred after the raids on the city's gay steam baths on February 5, 1981. The coordinated police maneuver resulted in 286 arrests – the largest single mass arrest in Canada during peacetime (Lehman 1994). News of the raids reached "gay communities in Italy, Holland, Denmark, Tel Aviv, Australia, Finland, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, and the United States and some corresponding governments demanded Ottawa investigate this assault to civil rights" (Lehman 1994:32). A well-publicized event, the Toronto Sun and the Toronto Star both published the names and addresses of everyone charged with keeping a "common bawdy house (Berwick 1994b). However, it was the response to the raids by members of the g/l/b/t community and their sympathizers that has left an indelible mark on the local landscape of the gay village.

After the raids, a protest was organized overnight which drew an estimated 3000 people (Lehman 1994). The plan was to march to police headquarters, but as the group swelled from 300 people, who met at the corner of Yonge and Wellesley, to a much larger crowd, the original plan of marching to police headquarters was abandoned as the massive group continued to move down Yonge Street (Lehman 1994). Yonge Street gave the marchers much more visibility and a larger public presence. Yelling chants of "Stop The Cops" and "No More Shit", the crowd eventually stopped at the 52 Division before moving to the final destination, the legislation grounds, where police clashed with the protesters as they tried to force down the door. One protester commented that it was "the night the main street of Canada's largest city belonged to us, and nobody – not even the police – seemed to be able to do anything about it" (Hannon cited in Grube 1997:140).

Two weeks later, another even larger protest followed drawing over 4,000 people. These demonstrations continued to have a profound impact on sexual minorities in Toronto and similar protests continued over a three-year period (from 1981 until 1983), regularly drawing thousands of protesters (Grube 1997). As Mark Lehman argues "the community discovered cohesion could become *capital*, and perhaps, *power*… The courage to become *visible* brought cohesive binding unity" (Lehman 1994:32-33). Although the raids and the organized responses did vividly change the gay community, it is necessary to problematize any sense of unity and trouble understandings of visibility within queer social space. Nonetheless it is accurate to say that the struggles over the right to occupy and sexualize space did in many ways fuse and formalize the gay community. It is also significant to note that the first Lesbian Pride March was held in May 1981, three months after the police raid (Grube 1997).

A article in the Toronto Star revealed that the police operating budget for 1981 requested a total of $7.5 million for the intelligence and morality bureaus together, while asking for a scant $1 million for homicide investigation.
(The BodyPolitic, No. 71/March 1981:10)

The remaining two chapters depart from a focus on historicized gay resistance and struggle embodied in the spectacle of large-scale protests and the grand scale struggle over space. Instead I turn to explore more mundane possibilities of resistance, critical occupation and the (re)experiencing of public space. By integrating narratives from members of the Toronto Frontrunners and continuing to draw from numerous other texts, I explore the social space of the running club and continue to unpack its associated material landscape – the gay village. Central to this investigation is Lefebvre's notion of abstract space, which I use to make sense of the ways in which gay male consumer culture dominates the streetscapes of the village. I also explore how the intertwining of the commercial and social life of the street is inseparable from the social space of the running club.

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Detour:

The Quest for a Counterspace

In the two remaining chapters of this dissertation I take up Lefebvre's notion of 'counterspace' to explore the simultaneous realization of spatialities of domination and resistance within the Frontrunners. These chapters reveal the ways in which a geographic conception of resistance might enrich our understandings of what is at stake in 'queer' spaces. This inquiry focuses on the meaning and significance of the Toronto Frontrunners (TFR) running club and examines how social spaces created by sexual dissidents are shaped by the interplay of domination and resistance. Rather than work with the couplet "power/resistance", it is important to acknowledge that geographies of domination and resistance are thoroughly *entangled* (Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison 2000).

By focusing on both domination and resistance I want to reinforce that resistance is not outside of power as the power/resistance couplet infers. By domination, I do not mean power by right, law or punishment. Foucault (1990:92) warns that power is not a "general system of domination exerted by one group over another". Yet it is crucial that understandings of domination do not dissolve. Domination results from multiple mechanisms which operate via technique, normalization and "by control, methods that are employed on all levels and in forms that go beyond the state and its apparatus" (Foucault 1990:89). There are numerous existing systems of domination, such as discursive practices and the production of knowledge, which dominate, exploit, and oppress. bell hooks explains that

> [p]articipants in contemporary discussions of culture highlighting difference and otherness who have not interrogated their perspectives, the location from which they write *in a culture of domination*, can easily make of this potentially radical discipline a new ethnographic terrain, a field of study where old practices are simultaneously critiqued, re-enacted and sustained (emphasis added, 1990:125).

By continuing to examine the ways in which space is synonymous with power, I explore the geography of social relations within the TFR, focusing specifically on the entanglement of power relations of domination and resistance[1].

A common motif in ethnographic writing has been that of resistance (Groves 1999). While 'post' theorizing has disrupted the production of unified narratives of collective struggle against inequality, resistance has remained a concept fraught with hope and refusal on the part of researchers. Abu-Lughod's (1990) well-known critique warns of the tendency of researchers to "romantize" resistance and overlook complex relations of domination. Researchers working towards a fuller understanding of resistance have asked questions regarding the interpretation of resistance. Questions include: what constitutes resistance?; is every action imbued with resistant intent?; and is it even possible to distinguish between power and resistance? (Groves 1999; Hoffman 1999; Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison 2000). These questions have posed important methodological and theoretical dilemmas for interpretive work. Drawing on psychoanalytic approaches, Alice Pitt (1998) suggests that there is a danger of finding resistance in all the wrong places. Pitt argues that there is a problem of attributing meaning to actions that may or may not correspond to the meaning actors themselves hold. Clearly, concepts of 'resistance' are often unproblematically sanitized, romanticized and overextended in ethnographic writing.

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[1] Entanglement is a spatial metaphor that geographers Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison (2000) advance in order to reaffirm that there is no dragging apart of domination and resistance.

In The History of Sexuality, Foucault predicts that the word *power* will lead to a number of misunderstandings[2]. He argues that power is omnipresent and "is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (1990:93). This reading of power suggests that resistance cannot be seen as something that happens in opposition to or as separate from power. In Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination and Resistance, Sharp et al (2000) outline a Foucauldian reading of power as:

> a thoroughly entangled bundle of exchanges dispersed 'everywhere' through society, as comprising a 'micro-physical' or 'capillary' geography of linkages, intensities and frictions, and as thereby not being straightforwardly in the service of any one set of peoples, institutions or movements (pg. 20).

Power, particularly when considered through a Foucauldian framework, is a relation that is subtle yet totalizing, ordered yet impossible to pinpoint. Foucault (1990) states that power must be understood as a *process* not as a possession or a general system of domination of the more powerful over the less powerful. Power is *exercised* and is not to be understood as following a model that maps a direct line from oppressor to oppressed.

Moreover, this approach attempts to resist constructing a binary of opposing (dominating and resistant) forces, which still implies that power is the preserve of the dominant (Sharp et al 2000).

The study of resistance must also be understood as a function of power, as a relation that is exercised in ways that may also be difficult to pinpoint or map. Geographers have introduced new understandings of resistance and offer a fresh layer of interpretation. In particular, several geographers have questioned orthodox concepts of resistance (Pile & Keith 1997; Routledge 1997; Cresswell 1996; Sharp et al 2000). Orthodox understandings of resistance focus on open, visible confrontations that pursue specific transformative goals tracing a straight line from the oppressed to the oppressor. This notion of resistance is often limited to large-scale struggles resulting in grand gestures of opposition, such as a rally, march or protest. Being "resistant" in this frame is largely about political mobilization embedded in geographically circumscribed communities. Here resistance is constituted by disruptive performances that rely on visual recognition and display[3]. In other words, resistance is often expected to be visible and identifiable whereas power itself is not. Resistance is also expected to be something tangible that can be readily counted or qualified.

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In the early stages of this project I was met with considerable opposition as I was beginning to articulate geographies of resistance that reside in the everyday. Initially Steve Pile's work led my way, in particular his assertion that resistance is "less about particular acts, than about the desire to find a place in a power-geography where space is denied, circumscribed and/or totally administered" (1997:15). I began this project by considering how a spatial imagination informed an understanding of homophobia and the ways in which sexual minorities create their own spaces. I shifted my focus from

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[2] See *History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1990 edition) chapter 2 "Method".

[3] In chapter two I have outlined the limitations and overpriviliging of ocular epistemologies that reduce space to a surface that is "transparent". I by no means want to suggest that resistance within a collective, community or "visual formant" is completely erroneous. Rather I want to challenge the kind of logic that only considers and frames resistance within "political actions which are public and/or overt and/or collective – thus rendering private and/or covert and/or personal forms of resistance invisible" (Pile 1997:12).

When read through Lefebvre's dialectical approach orthodox conceptualizations of resistance are problematic as they celebrate 'unitary', 'visible' and 'absolute' ideas of resistance. Such interpretations of resistance are not viable within a spatial or dialectical framework that acknowledges contradictions, incompleteness and partiality. Orthodox accounts of resistance follow a precise aim, which is to demonstrate *a coherence*. A dialectical framework determines that unity and coherence are artificial products. Given that social space itself cannot be defined precisely, that power can not be pinpointed and that it is impossible to eliminate contradictions within society, it is unreasonable to make such demands on resistance. Orthodox accounts of resistance ignore and silence the mundane and banal spaces within the everyday, which are not necessarily about "fighting back" but about seeking out, creating, occupying and nurturing alternative spatialities from those defined through oppression and exploitation (hooks 1990; Pile & Keith 1997; Soja 1996).

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'particular acts' to think and write about resistance within the social space of the Frontrunners. This is where I was met with much opposition. People's postmodern sensibilities, often informed by Foucauldian understandings of power, led them to have extremely nuanced 'post' understandings of power while maintaining thoroughly orthodox understandings of resistance. In other words, it was as if there was a monopoly on what was considered 'resistant'. This was made particularly clear to me while presenting a paper at the *Society for Philosophy and Geography Conference* titled "Exploring Alternative Terrains of Resistance: Spatializing Resistance in the Frontrunners". I was vigorously challenged on my framing of resistance and was asked why I did not study something like Stonewall, which was 'obviously' a moment of resistance.

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Counterspaces: The spaces that difference makes[4]

Lefebvre was interested in daily life at its most banal. The concept of everyday life was one that he critically examined and problematized and in the process the everyday lost its appearance of triviality and insignificance. Lefebvre argued that social space was both oppressive and enabling, that it simultaneously "contains potentialities" whereby a body could inaugurate the project of a different space (1991:349). These different spaces, called "counterspaces", arise from individual bodies through the appropriation of space and the exercise of the ability to invent new forms of space (Stewart 1995). Lefebvre was particularly interested in people's ability to generate counterspaces within the social space of everyday life (Soja 1996). In The Production of Space, Lefebvre provides an example of a counterspace where a community demands an empty space for play and encounter. Such a space is a counterspace in that it resists and struggles against the "endless expansion of the 'private' and of industrial profitability; and against specialized spaces and a narrow localization of function" (1991:382). Counterspaces are dynamic, counter-hegemonic social spaces that enable

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Resistance appears to be most easily understood and accepted when it directly mirrors domination, such as in the case in 1969, where the occupants of the Stonewall bar directly battled the police. In this case resistance can be pinned down as fully intelligible, visible and can be situated directly within the concrete geography of the bar on Christopher Street. My response to the question "why not study Stonewall" is key to understanding this project. Sexual minorities continue to negotiate space that is saturated with relations of domination. I am interested in examining how sexual minorities seek "to create new meanings out of imposed meanings, to re-work and divert space to other ends" (Pile 1997:16). At the same time that it is critical to pay

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[4] The phrase "the spaces that difference makes" is borrowed from Hooper & Soja (1993).

alternative geographies. Lefebvre argued that the "quest for a counterspace" arises out of the creativity of the excluded and marginalized who develop concrete alternatives to the present spatial system (1991:383).

bell hooks (1990) offers an important framework for considering the importance of counterspaces. In her essay, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness", hooks writes about the need for black Americans to "create spaces within that culture of domination if we are to survive whole... Everywhere we go there is pressure to silence our voices, to co-opt and undermine them" (1990:148). Writing about the experience of space and location for racial minorities, hooks creatively explores the notion of counterspaces (Soja 1996). She is unequivocal in her argument that counterspaces are important spaces of resistance. She argues that "our living depends on our ability to conceptualize alternatives, often improvised" (hooks 1990:149). In another essay "Homeplace: a Site of Resistance", she critically examines the ways in which black women transform domestic space into a crucial site of resistance in racist culture. Her work speaks to powerful and largely undervalued counterspaces. Similarly, I

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attention to Abu-Loghud's warning to avoid "romanticizing" resistance, it is also necessary that we study the connection between power and space within *local and particular spaces in everyday life.* Otherwise we fail to acknowledge and understand the everyday exercise of power in the lives of sexual dissidents - and we will continue to only acknowledge "particular acts" which have become emblematic of 'queer' resistance. I remain ambivalent about proclaiming queer transgression and resistance that is public, visual and mappable, particularly when it erases the multiple and fluid ways that sexual minorities imagine, negotiate, create, use and contest space.

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hope to show the importance of the social space of the Frontrunners, where queer runners have access to a space where they do not encounter the displacement and alienation of homophobic culture.

Counterspaces are spaces that fracture the stable, predictable and homogenizing use of space by enabling new spatial and therefore social relations[5]. These alternative local spatializations hold the potential for generating new, more equitable spaces. Yet Lefebvre also warns that counterspaces can easily lapse back into the 'normative' ordering of space as they bend or yield to the powerful pressure to homogenize not only spaces but also people (Stewart 1995). Never outside of the dialectics of cultural struggle, counterspaces themselves are understood as spaces of contradiction, spaces of both domination and resistance (Shields 1999). It is within this understanding of counterspace that I position the complex social space of the Toronto Frontrunners.

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[5] Shields notes that "Lefebvre's formulations poses the disturbing question of people's cooperation, docility and complicitous self-implication in systems of inequality" (1999:183).

Chapter 4

The Geography of Social Relations in the Toronto Frontrunners

> *Toronto Frontrunners:*
> Since 1987, we've been bringing together competitive and recreational runners of all abilities - from novices to advanced competitive runners - for recreation, health and friendship. Departing from Toronto's lesbian and gay village, we run a variety of routes that can be tailored to your exercise level: comfortable, challenging or rigorous. We organize races and relay team events from 5 km to marathon distance.
>
> Every Saturday, at 9:00 a.m., we hold our weekly fun run. Come dressed for the weather, because we don't stop for heat or cold, rain, sleet or snow. And the fun doesn't stop when the running does. Afterwards, we get together for coffee, juice, muffins and easy conversation at a nearby cafe.
> (http://www.frontrunners.org/)

> **Sonya:** *Our mandate has always been focused on providing a safe and friendly place for people in the community to run. That's been my impression of what the main focus of the group is. You know we are not out there marching for Take Back the Night or anything.*

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the social space of the TFR and to reveal the ways in which this counterspace provides an important site from which to consider geographies of resistance. I am not suggesting that there is singularity of 'cause' within the Frontrunners nor am I making an over-zealous identification of oppositional behavior within the running club. Rather taking as axiomatic that all space is produced out of struggle, I explore the geography of social relations within the social space of the Frontrunners. By examining the entanglements of domination and resistance that mutually exist within this counterspace, I can begin to unpack the simultaneous realization of different spatialities within the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners. Chapter Five then extends this notion of counterspaces through an examination of the streetscapes of the gay village.

One cannot avoid noticing that the Frontrunners are largely a white, gay and fast running club. To critically understand the geography of social relations within the Frontrunners requires the unmasking of appearances, a digging for insight beneath what is easily recognizable and directly measureable. This chapter largely focuses on issues of belonging and displacement. In the first section of this chapter several narratives are presented that outline some of the defining features of the social space of the TFR. Throughout the rest of the chapter narratives are brought in that complicate, unsettle and contradict some of these assertions. Understanding that counterspaces are dynamic social spaces, which can be filled with both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic meanings, complicates and challenges what Pitts (1998) problematizes as the "good" story of resistance where hegemonic meanings are solidly refused and counter-hegemonic meanings are clearly articulated.

As I moved through the interviews I asked each participant to reflect on the meaning of the running club in their lives. I wanted to get a sense of why they belonged to this particular running club. In other words, I wanted to know what was significant or important about training in a club that was open to sexual minorities. Frequently I began the interviews by asking participants to talk about their experiences with the Frontrunners. Some of the questions included: when did you join the Frontrunners running club?; how did you first learn about the running club?; what are some of the reasons that you run with a gay and lesbian group?, and what does belonging to the Frontrunners mean to you? Several of the runners discussed how important it was for them to run with a group where they could "be themselves", where they felt safe and comfortable and could be "out" with other gay and lesbian runners. Take, for example, the following passages:

Sean: *What attracted me [to the Frontrunners] was healthy people, common interests and it wouldn't be like going to the bar but it is a link to the community in a healthy way... I think it's different for the gay world because it's more important to have this...it's more than just about participating in sport... there is that other community angle that you wouldn't have in a straight club.*

Michael: *I moved to Toronto in 1996... and I didn't come out until '96 so there was something that I was looking for. How do I get into the community? How do I make an entry into it? And I ran a lot and I am a reasonably good runner so it is a safe thing to do. I can get in and I don't have to worry about a lot of stuff. I don't have to worry about a lot of challenges.*

Brad: *Frontrunners has probably been my singular most significant connection with the gay community. People who are my good friends today are people who I have met at Frontrunners. When I look at some of the things, I mean I have traveled with people who are Frontrunners. When I have traveled around the world, I have stayed with Frontrunners and you know other people in the club have as well. So while it has a very local connection, in terms of the whole host of* *social activities here, the world has also gotten smaller to me because of Frontrunners and it is kind of amazing to end up in another country and to call up a Frontrunner and I mean, instantly because of the Frontrunner connection, to have people to run with, to go out to dinner with, it's kind of amazing.*

Andy: *Well you know we have a ... gay people have a different sensibility. You can be camp, you can be bitchy, you can be serious but it's always very supportive. There is a competitive edge but it never is a sort of... you know I am going to kick your ass type edge. It is always okay we are going to run, we are going to run hard but you know if you're in trouble there will always be someone there for you. And we can just ...you know you can talk about your relationship, if your having a problem with your relationship or whatever. You can talk about it with your friends because they are going through the same things that you are. It's sort of almost peer support...queer support in a way.*

Ramona: *When I joined I was still kind of adapting to gay life. I had only come out about 4 years before ...so I was still kind of doing some adapting. Now I almost feel I need to get my fix of the gay community on a regular basis. And probably because... well for many reasons and those reasons why I like coming to Church Street to run... running with gay people because it's affirming, it feels safe, I can be who I am and comfortably and proudly so with them and without any ...well without the same limitations and inhibitions that I have to have when I'm feeling unsafe in a heterosexual environment*

Cathy: I*n terms of your feelings around safety ...is that safe in a social or in a physical sense?*

Ramona: *safe I would say socially. ... I felt very free to be able to express myself exactly as who I am which is a lesbian. And talk about my relationship with Shannon openly and be affectionate openly and make jokes about who I am and where I come from and my sexuality. In a social context I like to have my sexuality pretty close to the surface. I tend to be that kind of person. My humor is that way and my personality is that way and I'm flirtatious, and playful and open and I can't necessarily be those things in straight environments.*

Before gaining a critical understanding of the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners, it is first necessary to unpack the meaning of this club in the lives of those who "use" this space. The five preceding narratives provide a few of many declarations about the importance of the running club in the lives of sexual minorities. These narratives begin to establish the TFR as a counterspace through mundane examples of the dialectical relationship between sexuality and space. In other words, Sean, Michael, Brad, Andy and Ramona's stories begin to reveal why and how the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners matters. One way to read these excerpts is that they testify to the necessity of counterspaces that are not bounded by the dominant constructions of (hetero)sexuality.

Several of the participants interviewed for this study discussed how the Frontrunners provide them with a meaningful connection into 'the gay community'. As Sean outlines, the Frontrunners provides a social connection that is not centred on clubs and bars. In particular he comments that the TFR provides a "healthy" link into gay social life and that this "community angle" is important to the "gay world". Several other men I interviewed also stated how important it was for them to move beyond the social setting of bars and into what one Frontrunner calls a "*totally different atmosphere which is more about friendship than cruising and that kind of thing*". Several of the gay runners discussed how important it is for them to have access to a group that focuses on running not clubbing and where they can meet and build friendships with other gay men who are interested in training.

Michael first joined the Frontrunners after moving to Toronto. He had not been 'out' for very long and did not know any gay people in Toronto. The Frontrunners provide him with a point of entry into the gay community in Toronto. As a skilled runner, Michael felt that running was a "safe" way to meet a group of gay men in Toronto. Recalling his first run with the group he explained:

> *The first day was really terrifying. Not because of my ability to run but because I hadn't been out for very long. After I remember going home and thinking... Oh my God I am on top of the world. I phoned my sister who lived in Vancouver who I am very close too and I told her that I ran with the Frontrunners that day. She asked how it was... and I said really good. So she said are they good runners? Yeah, I said, they are pretty good. They don't run like girls (laughing).*

Although Michael felt insecure as a newly 'out' gay man, running was "safe" because it provided a way for him to establish social contact with a group of gay men. Running was also "safe" because Michael was able to maintain the pace of the group and socialize with other gay runners. After his first run with the group Michael left feeling ecstatic, knowing he had made a connection to a group of gay men who also were competitive runners. His relationship with these men continued to build to the point that the TFR form the basis of his social network. He explains:

> *every single person, every friend that I have in Toronto I can trace back to that running group. I knew nobody when I moved here and everybody I have met that is close to me I can trace back to somebody in the group. So it is really a touchstone for me.*

Brad has run with the TFR since their inception in 1987. As one of the founding and longest running members of the running club he recounted that the TFR has had a significant impact on his social life. No longer living in the gay ghetto, he credits the Frontrunners as being his most consistent and strongest tie to the gay community. Not only has the club provided the basis of his queer social network within Toronto but when he travels this social network extends to wherever there is another Frontrunners running club. For Brad membership in the Frontrunners has advantages both in terms of a global and a local context.

For Andy, one of the most significant things about the Frontrunners is the "queer support". He positions this support as being part of the gay sensibility of the running club. In The Arena of Masculinity, Brian Pronger writes that gay men often have "an exceptional way of understanding themselves and the culture in which they live, a distinctive mode of being in the world" (1992:94). Andy reasons that the Frontrunners provides social support for runners not only in regards to training but in terms of life issues such as relationships. Clearly the

Frontrunners provides an important space where gay men and lesbians contextualize their experiences. Andy's use of the term "queer support" indicates the importance of the TFR as providing a gay fraternal social space that is nurturing for a number of the men in the club.

Andy continued in our interview to outline clear boundaries in terms of what the Frontrunners club was and was not. He explained:

> *First and foremost our group has always been a running group, a gay running group but a running group. We have always been serious about it. Never really political. In the past I know some members have talked about doing outreach to organizations that support HIV. But we really are a sports group. That's how I look at it. I enjoy running, the athleticism and I am an out man but I look to this group to be with my own kind almost. To just enjoy it and not be political.*

For Andy "being with his own kind" meant being in a group that was different from what he referred to as "*that whole sort of heterosexual runner guy mystique*". I asked Andy to talk more about the ways that gay sensibility impacted running in the club. He responded with the following:

Andy: *I have run with many straight men and its always who has the biggest balls, who can run the hardest, who can run the longest, who can run the fastest. In this group there is that element but its always...well here you run hard but there is always someone who will pick you up if you fall behind and there is always interesting conversation – literature, film, art, lovers ...you name it. There is that social edge mixed in with the athleticism. And I think that is the gay sensibility.*

Ramona is one of the few women who maintains a membership with the club. She is an accomplished runner and has competed in numerous marathons in Canada and abroad. She spoke at length about the ways the social environment of TFR provided her with an important site to explore and connect with other gay and lesbian athletes. For Ramona, the Frontrunners provides a place to run with other competitive runners. As one of the few women who regularly runs with the group she enjoys the fast pace of the runs. In addition to the runs, Ramona stated that the TFR is important to her because it is a social space that feels, in her words, "affirming" and "safe". Ramona clearly indicates that the TFR provides a sense of safety that is not available to her in "heterosexual environments". While Andy is an "out" gay man, Ramona is not able to be "out" and struggles to maintain self-concealment in her workplace. As Gill Valentine reminds us "to be lesbian or gay is both to perceive and to experience the heterosexuality of the majority of environments" (1993:396). The TFR gives her access to a counterspace where heterosexuality is not powerfully expressed. In the social space of the running club Ramona can be openly affectionate with her lover, playful and flirtatious.

August 8, 2001
Danielle Goldey and Meredith Kott were escorted out of a Los Angeles Dodger's baseball game by eight security guards after someone complained that the two lesbians were kissing. An article in FAB magazine reported that the complaint to security stated that "children should not be exposed to 'those people'". Goldey and Kott hired a layer to demand an apology or a suit would follow. In addition to a public apology, the Dodgers donated 5,000 tickets to three gay and lesbian organizations and promised sensitivity training for their employees and security guards.

http://www.outsports.com/review/review083000.htm

As Valentine's (1993) research indicates, sexual minorities are acutely aware of the ways in which power relations operate in most everyday environments. The disciplinary gaze of others often requires that sexual minorities' self presentation does not disrupt the 'naturalness' of heterosexual hegemony. As a result many sexual dissidents are aware of negotiating a range of identities and statuses as they move through different spaces (Valentine 1993). This remains a significant reason why gay and lesbian runners seek out safe spaces. Within the Frontrunners exists a geography of resistance that provides a counterspace to the dominant relations of (hetero)sexuality, which are tirelessly and relentlessly reproduced in the everyday.

Just The Facts: The Pussy Palace

The Pussy Palace is a somewhat irregular women's bath house night. The women of Toronto have visited a men's bath house on four separate nights to create an event of our own, tailored to women's desires. There is lots of sensual dancing, cruising and sexy outfits of all descriptions.

http://www.pussypalacetoronto.com/info/index.html

The next few narratives begin to outline some of the tensions and conflicts that individuals experience in locations where the expression of gay and lesbian sexualities are 'out of place'. In particular a few of the Frontrunners discussed what it was like for them when they ran with groups who were not gay-identified. A number of the Frontrunners were interested in doing additional training within a more structured running program. While continuing to run with the Frontrunners, they joined another Toronto-based running club called Excess Energy. Mark and

James, two of the runners I interviewed, spoke about feeling out of place in this predominantly straight running club:

Mark: *...at Excess Energy I mean it was awful being there. Now it wasn't outward awful but you sensed that, at least I sensed it and I think other people did sense it as well, and um you know you didn't feel entirely comfortable in that group. There were a lot of straight guys who were like hyperstraight in that group. It was like straight guy talk the most of the time and you couldn't be as much yourself - certainly no sexual innuendo or anything like that.*

Like I can remember a couple of times when I felt really intensely uncomfortable with that group. Once they had an event for Hallowe'en when one guy dressed up. They convinced him to dress as a fairy and they called him the Excess Energy fairy. And afterwards they showed pictures to everyone and it was at one of the people's houses and there was always this talk about the Excess Energy fairy and they would do the wrist thing [bends his wrist] and they would go "Ooh Bill you're the Excess Energy fairy", in just the kind of classic straight guy kind of campy way. But in a way that made me feel really uncomfortable and made me think, don't you notice that there is a whole big bunch of us back here that are gay and might be offended by that. Anyways...I always found that uncomfortable and then you know the whole group laughed and I wasn't laughing and you know just that kind of thing.

James: *I mean I ran with the Excess Energy group for a couple of months and then I convinced my boyfriend this one time to come out. And I remember that after the end of interval training we kissed and I remember that other Frontrunners and a number of other people told me afterwards that they were very uncomfortable about that because in everyone's memories that was the first time that anyone had ever made it clear, really clear what was going on. It was like right up until then it was like they knew that we were gay but we didn't talk about it.*

Reading the narratives through a dialectical framework begins to reveal how power circulates while retaining a focus on the countless processes of domination and resistance that are endlessly circulating in the social space of the club. In the first selection of narratives it is overwhelmingly clear that it is important and meaningful for members of the running club to connect with what has been collectively and repeatedly called "the gay community". This link to the gay community is sought through a social space that is "safe" and where there are "healthy" alternatives for developing friendships with other gays and lesbians without the bars and clubs that traditionally have been a focus of the gay village. These narratives are instructive when used to understand how the production and maintenance of "safe" and "healthy" spaces are fundamentally related to representations of sexual identities and to an ongoing process in which subjective identity and space exist in a mutually constitutive relationship. In this regard, I want to continue to trace out the overlapping discourses of "safe" and "healthy" that are embedded in the narratives. Bringing them into a dialectical framework and allowing the possibilities for new syntheses to overcome the entrenched features of "safe" and "healthy" permits the surfacing of internal paradoxes and divisions within this social space.

Dis-ease In the Toronto Frontrunners

Several of the Toronto Frontrunners discussed how important it was for them to be involved in a gay social scene that was separate from the bar and club scene that dominates the social life on Church Street. For example, Sean was interested in "*healthy people... a link to the community in a healthy way"*. Similarly, Michael was interested in an environment that "*is more about friendship than cruising*". Clearly one of the key features of the TFR is that it provides what is considered a "healthy alternative" within the gay community. While writing on the Gay Games, Brian Pronger explained that gay athletics is often "mythically understood as a sign of health" (1992:257). Of course any involvement in sport can also be unhealthy or lead to negative effects[1], although this is less often discussed. Clearly the social space of the Frontrunners is framed as one that is both safe and healthy.

In the following excerpt Andy discusses how the Frontrunners has been a way to remain "insulated" from disease:

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[1] It is interesting to note the abundance of Physical Education Departments that are now housed within Health Science Faculties or within academic programs such as the Department of Exercise, Sport and Health Education. There are also several sport-related professional associations that combine sport and health such as the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD).

Cathy: *What are some of the things that you enjoy about running with a gay club?*

Andy: *Most of my close friends are from the running group. And this is a question I think about with the whole AIDS situation. I went into my relationship in 1981 when I was 23 and I am still in that same relationship. I've known many people who have died of AIDS but most of them have not been close friends. But most of my gay friends that I met are through the group and we are all still here. I find that very interesting... and I wonder is there some connection between running, a more healthy lifestyle, a sort of making it as a group of survivors through this whole AIDS epidemic or is it just sheer good luck. It's a question I always kick around. I find it interesting...the group that I run with and there are about 5 of us who have basically been in the group from the beginning and we still run together and we are very good friends.*

And it made me think last night did that have any connection with the disease that has basically decimated our community that we've managed to make it through and many many of our peers have not? I mean I guess we were just so busy running, we started doing marathons together and when your training for the marathon you're focused on running and everything else falls away. You know going to the bars, going to the baths whatever you know falls away. ...So I have to wonder sometimes if that hasn't been an insulating factor towards this whole disease on the outside.

In the preceding narrative, Andy discusses the enormous loss to the gay community resulting from AIDS. 1n 1992 alone AIDS was the leading cause of death in the City of Toronto among males 25-44 (Lehman 1994). Andy suggests that he was more "insulated" from this disease since he was focused on both his running and what he refers to as a healthier lifestyle rather than maintaining a connection to the bars and baths. I was struck by his framing of the social space of the running club as providing a form of sanctuary from a disease that left all of his running friends uninfected and "safe" while claiming the lives of many of their peers.

In my interview with Brad, the only other runner in the study who had been involved with the Frontrunners since their inception in 1987, I returned to the topic of AIDS.

Cathy: *Would you say that the running club was a place that was sheltered from AIDS?*

Brad: *It is interesting ...There has almost been an anti-message, that people have been able to keep the AIDS crisis at bay. In the early days, and I'm thinking of running in the 80's, we were surrounded by information about the crisis - because it was all just taking off in terms of information and I think the running club was probably one of the places that you could actually run with people, enjoy yourself and not have to be depressed or overwhelmed with all of this other stuff that was going on.*

It was also interesting that we had one of our members that died of AIDS. I'm curious did that come up at all?

Cathy: *No*

Brad: *I might even get emotional about this but Tony was somebody who was a founding member. ...In 1996 actually, when Tony died...It happened very quickly. ...Tony was on the steering committee and there was four of us on the steering committee so Tony's death was certainly felt by us. ...He ended up in hospital ... and within six weeks Tony went from being admitted ...to dying. There was a group of us in the Running Club and his friends, there was probably about 20 of us who got together a care team for him. Again it wasn't a club sponsored thing, this was an individual thing and we did a care team for him at home. He wanted to die at home*

...Front Runners was really the significant group of that 20 people. I would have to say that Frontrunners was an amazing support during that time. ...It is interesting since Tony's death, you know if he had died in a car crash people would think or talk about him now. But it is interesting rarely does his name come up.

Brad's narrative sits in direct opposition to Andy's. Brad states that, as a member of the running club, he was safely removed from the spaces that were directly associated with the spread of disease, such as bars and baths. As his commitment to running increased, those other places simply faded away from his experience in the gay community and he and his friends made it "*as a group of survivors*" through the AIDS epidemic. Andy's narrative suggests that the social space of the Frontrunners is as Pronger (1992) describes mythically associated with health. Brad's narrative complicates this understanding of the social space of the running club and reveals that the running club cannot be understood in a coherent and straightforward way. He does suggest that the running club provided a space that, particularly during the first few years of the club, was not saturated with information on the AIDS epidemic that flooded the gay community. He states how important it was to have a space that was about enjoyment and pleasure without having to "*be overwhelmed with all of this other stuff that was going on*". While Andy suggests that the Frontrunners provided a form of sanctuary from disease, Brad discusses the AIDS related death of one of the club's founding members. Brad's account of Tony's death begins to reveal how contentious "unhealthy" bodies are within the running club. Despite several Frontrunners providing support to Andy while he was dying there continues to be dis-ease around any body that is not healthy.

From the Toronto Women's Bath House Committee

Thursday, September 21, 2000

The Pussy Palace Women's Bathhouse is an event where women can explore their sexuality in a safe and supportive environment. The event, which is organized by a small committee of volunteers, is held at a city licensed and regulated men's bathhouse; one of dozens in Toronto that is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The activities that occur at the Pussy Palace occur all the time in a legal environment. Our liquor license was posted and all those who attended the event had their ID and bags checked. The boundaries of the drinking area were patrolled and stringently enforced.

Our mission is to transform our own and our communities' understanding of queer women's sexuality and to provide women with information about healthy sexual practices. As a committee, we are committed to organizing events that are safe, fun and lawful. On Thursday as women entered the bath house they were handed a flyer which informed them of what constitutes illegal activity in regards to sexuality and public nudity.

On the night of the event (Thursday, September 14), at approximately 1 am, five male plain clothes police officers entered the bathhouse. With no warning, they proceeded to search every public area in the bathhouse. Many women were topless, and organizers were not allowed to warn women before the large and intimidating men roamed the building. The police knew that this was a women-only event and they knew that women would be in various stages of undress. Despite this they chose to send male rather than female officers. We do not understand why the Toronto police force felt that they needed to send five large male officers to ensure that we were complying with liquor license regulations. After a thorough search of the house, the officers exited the building. Without warning or provocation, three officers returned to the bathhouse and proceeded to search private rooms. At one point officers lingered in a room for 20 minutes questioning the two women inside. In another woman's room the officers questioned a woman and attempted to look through her personal belongings until she objected, at which point they desisted. They proceeded to the foyer of the bathhouse and began to aggressively question the head of security, volunteers and a committee member. At this point, we stated that we did not want to answer any more questions until we had a lawyer present. Many women at the event were deeply angered and traumatized by the police raid and some of them chose to leave at that point. The police spent an hour and a half at the event: they searched the premises from 12:45 to 2:15 a.m.

The police actions on Thursday September 14, are another example of the long-standing police harassment of the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities. The laws regulating sex and public nudity are unclear and inconsistently enforced. This is a disturbing instance of homophobic police harassment and seriously draws into question the sincerity of the police as they claim to be building bridges with the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities.

(http:www.pussypalacetoronto.com/info)

Asymmetrical power relations in the everyday

Lefebvre is referred to as a philosopher of everyday life as he systematically investigated both the richness and complexity of lived experience (Gardiner 2000). For Lefebvre, everyday life holds resistant or counter-hegemonic qualities that point towards the possibilities of dis-alienation and a more fully experienced life. Differing from "macrosociological" approaches that ignore the specificity of everyday life, Lefebvre focused on contextual meanings of daily life. Gardiner explains in Critiques of Everyday Life that we cannot be content with surface accounts of ordinary social practices but that "we must be concerned to analyze the asymmetrical *power relations* that exist" (2000:7). Indeed, tracing power relations within the Toronto Frontrunners raises questions about geographies of exclusion in terms of who has access to this social space and who is denied meaningful entrance to this space.

It is not my intention in this project to focus on gay athleticism or the lesbian experience in orthodox sporting culture. There is a rich source of material in this area including the work of Helen Lenskjy (1997, 1992, 1991,1990, 1986), Pat Griffin (1998, 1997, 1996,1992), Heather Sykes (1998, 2001a, 2001b) and Brian Pronger (1992). However, I do want to begin to move outside of the frames being offered in these initial TFR narratives which recount stories of belonging and safety. As outlined in the chapter three, the dialectical approach involves the study of internal contradictions that disorders and disrupts what appears to be 'fixed' and unified. Using this methodology I take up these narratives as "moments" which are not definitive but are unfinished, partial and contradictory. I disrupt the coherence and continuity that flows within and between these narratives. I want to pause here to reiterate that the dialectical approach does not simply foreclose or shut down what the participants are saying. Rather in order to unpack the production and meaning of the social environment of the TFR and Lefebvre's concept of "counterspace", the narratives are examined through contradictions that reveal how the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners is produced and maintained in a particular way.

Alienation: Sport and Masculinity

Sport sociologists have extensively studied the ways in which sport has been a key site within which cultural conceptions of masculinity have been constructed. Yet as Pronger (1992) argues, this focus has been overwhelmingly situated on hegemonic notions of masculinity and heterosexual significance. His work investigates how homosexual desire produces a different experience of sport[2]. Pronger states that "sport for homosexual men is a place of estrangement" (1992:39). James and Mark, the two runners who temporarily joined Excess Energy, were acutely aware of being out of place in a group of straight athletes. Several other Frontrunners also discussed experiences of exclusion from orthodox sport and inclusion in the "safe" social space of the Frontrunners.

In The Production of Space, Lefebvre pays critical attention to the notion of 'estrangement' amplifying the importance of this concept in everyday life. Estrangement is taken up through his theory of alienation which examines how daily life often closes down the possibilities for engagement and self-fulfillment, leaving people dislocated or isolated (Sheilds 1999). Drawing once again from Marx, Lefebvre deepened the analysis of alienation, which was focused on the workplace, and extended it into everyday life in general. Shields notes that alienation refers to "the distancing of subjects from the world, from themselves and from others around them" (1999:42). Alienation, for Lefebvre, is more than a psychological term. It is a spatial concept experienced materially through "displacement and distance" which limits full, lived engagement in daily life (Shields 1999:40). Take, for example, the way in which technology has created a situation which geographer Georges Benko calls "solitary communication". Benko explains:

> Homes are now self-sufficient in sounds and images, and in information. This development has two related consequences: an opening up to the rest of the planet thanks to the availability of instantaneous information from anywhere in the world, and at the same time a deeper personal isolation and an individualization in the experience of communication (1997:26).

Lefebvre's theory of alienation provides a lens through which to situate the distancing and displacement that occurs in the lives of sexual dissidents in general and gay men in sport environments in particular. Shields explains that alienation[3] is more than a term which captures "feelings" of estrangement. Rather, alienation exists in vividly material terms: "Estranged from our activities, ourselves and from each other, we still barely experience our lives, moving in a daze from obligation to obligation, programmed activity to programmed activity" (1999:40). Within several interviews there was a central theme involving stories

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[2] What remains unacknowledged within Pronger's (1992) work is that there is no critical awareness of the way racism, sexism and homophobia are interlocking systems of domination that estrange sexual minorities.

[3] Alienation is "to be displaced from oneself, to be foreign to oneself" (Ross in Shields 1999:41).

of being out of place or disconnected. Before running with the Frontrunners several gay men discussed feeling "foreign" in their own bodies, detached from their own physicality and athletic potential, and removed from sport landscapes in general. Frontrunners has been a safe counterspace to orthodox sport in that it has provided an environment through which gay men have the bodily experience of movement, the corporeal experience of running. In the excerpts that are included below, the runners discuss how the Frontrunners have provided a space for both rethinking and remaking their bodies:

James: *I did sport as a kid but I certainly feel that Frontrunners is one of the most important things that I do in terms of my self definition especially as a gay man and conquering some of the perceived boundaries of what I can and can't do. My body became less of a vessel and more of a part of me that I am proud of... It has been one of the most rewarding things in my life absolutely.*

Ethan: *I guess as a kid I never felt like I was athletic. I was really self-conscious about my body and I think that relates perfectly to being gay, and I think a gay and lesbian group just adds comfort where I can be myself. And I may not be good at it but I am given the opportunity to try and improve, which I like. I wouldn't feel as comfortable in a straight group as I do in a gay and lesbian group.*

Richard: *Being part of a big group is really fun too because for me being a queer person it always made me feel apart from ... I mean I really felt apart from everything else. I didn't really feel a part of any of the big groups. But this is like all of a sudden you are part of this big group of people that just moves together and does things together. You know that's something you miss... well a lot of queer people miss and all of a sudden you get to do it and feel a part of it and it feels really nice. I am so struck by how happy I am to have found this. Like the whole experience of the running and being with the group and I mean it's really changed my life actually. In the last year it's really changed how I see myself and the gay community.*

You know I can't quite figure it out. Running was like... the bain of my existence. You just felt like a loser. Like when I was a kid and I didn't think I was able to do sports. I found out I was gay when I was 11, I kinda always knew, I mean I was gay before that and knew that I was different and I thought it was that I couldn't do sports. ... But it's so not true and all of a sudden I am finding that out in the context of you know queer sports. I don't know what happens in childhood that makes so many gay men especially feel like they can't do sports. I mean there is nothing about your body that stops you from doing sports but there is something about what it's like to be a gay kid, whether you're perceived as such or you only know inside that you just don't feel a part of that whole ... You just take yourself out of that or you are taken out of that ...I don't quite know how to explain it...but it's amazing.

One way to read these excerpts is that they are testimonies of alienation and dis-alienation. Lefebvre's theory of alienation helps to highlight the relationship between location and identity (Ross 1996). James, Ethan and Richard all have experienced the corporeal consequences of alienation. Through the social space of the Frontrunners, they have a more complete engagement with their own bodies. They are still very much aware of hegemonic constructions of masculinity but they have found that their bodies are "made" and "remade" through the specific contexts of place and identity politics. Aware of being displaced in straight groups, perceiving body boundaries and limitations based on sexual identity, and feeling removed and distant from traditional sport environments are some of the ways these runners experienced alienation from the proscribed masculinity of sport culture.

> Letter to the Editor: XTRA (Nov 30,2000 pg. 8)
> The police raids on [gay] bathhouses in the 1980s showed us how vulnerable we are in the face of political and legal authorities, and that we needed to work hard to create a place where we are free to be ourselves. Those raids became a touchstone for the building of a strong queer community in Toronto. Recent police activities directed at the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered community have the potential to do the same
> (Anderson, Beam and Taves 2000).

Space, as Michael Brown (2000) notes, does not just represent power; it materializes it. Indeed spatial restrictions have affected gays and lesbians in several ways. It is, I would argue, the spatial production of difference that becomes the catalyst for individuals to seek out "safe" social space. The Frontrunners provides a space where gay runners can struggle against the socio-spatial relationships that alienate them. The participants' stories reflect the importance of the Frontrunners as producing a social space where, at the spatial scale of the body[4], they counter the workings of hegemonic power. They assert that being with a group like the Frontrunners has literally changed the ways in which they experience their bodies.

I asked Richard the following question after he talked about the alienation he had experienced with his own body:

Cathy: *So would it be accurate to say that it has been a bit of a reconnection for you to your body?*

Richard: *Oh totally. I feel for the first time in my life that I am getting back into my body. And we always think of that in terms of the hippies and getting into your body, do some yoga blah blah blah. But getting into your body is also about how you fit into the community because how you fit into the community and the social structure has a lot to do with how you connect to your body. So going into gay sports all of a sudden you're in this community and you feel part of it and that allows you to find your own body.*

I think gay sports brings a lot of confidence. Personally, as a gay person as a queer person I mean you can do things with your body. And I think for me and I suspect for a lot of people part of being queer when you are younger is thinking

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[4] This follows Neil Smith's (1993) sequence of geographic scales of which the body is the starting point.

> *that your body kind of betrays you in lots of ways. Especially for a male, I mean ... you think being gay has a lot to do with not being able to do sports for whatever reason even though that is not necessarily true you still experience it that way. I thought well I am gay, and I'm queer and you know my body is kind of working against me.*

Richard provides a striking account of the alienation he experienced both in terms of being socially disconnected (i.e. *I didn't really feel a part of any of the big groups*) and in terms of his own body space (i.e. *thinking that your body betrays you in lots of ways*). His experience of alienation reflects what Gardiner calls a "loss of control over essential human capacities and powers that should be firmly rooted in daily existence" (2000:75).

It may be tempting to read Richard's or any of the other narratives as coherent and unitary examples of individuals triumphing over broader social structures. However, the TFR does not result in tidy progression from exclusion to inclusion for sexual minorities. Nor does the counterspace of the running club produce a singular, unified, subaltern group that struggles to resist orthodox sport culture or homophobia. There are multiple interpretations of the social space of the TFR which reveal the dialectic alternation between fully lived engagement and alienated withdrawal. In order to move past notions of cohesiveness within the 'safe' space of the Frontrunners, it is necessary to dismantle and retrace the social space of the running club and allow the internal contradictions to break the surface.

Richard began our interview by telling me that for, the first time in his life, he had experienced his body as a site of action, agency and empowerment, rather than as a barrier or as a source of betrayal. He explained that running has provided him a way to be included, to feel "in place" in a group, to connect both with his own body and the gay community. The Frontrunners enabled him to resist and to challenge the operation of homophobia in his own life. As my interview with Richard continued, he revealed some other reasons why he has become such a disciplined runner. Since he began running three years ago, Richard has lost eighty pounds.

Richard: "P*art of what motivates me is just... you know especially in Toronto you fit into the gay male community and feel comfortable you have to look a certain way. 'cause if you don't ...it's hard being a big guy in any situation especially in the Toronto gay culture"*.

In this passage Richard begins to reveal more of the contradictory and fractured nature of lived experience. His personal identity and experiences with 'difference' are constructed not only in relation to homophobia but also to experiences of alienation from *within* the gay male community. Richard explains that "fitting" in to Toronto's gay culture means having a certain type of body - a muscular and shaped, fit not fat body. At the same time that running has been a way for him to resist his own and other's homophobic notions of queer masculinity, it has also required that he engage in a regime that produces his body in a more culturally desirable way (Foucault 1995; Valentine 1999). As Richard reveals in the preceding excerpt, Toronto's gay culture promotes new forms of discipline and normalization. This highlights the complex entanglements of power within the social space of the TFR and the gay community at large.

Richard's narrative speaks to the ways in which the body itself provides the site for social experience. Richard no longer feels the loss of control over his own body and physicality that he did before he began to run with the Frontrunners; in fact he now describes feeling connected to and powerful within his body. Yet, Richard is now more aware of a larger lack of corporeal freedom directed at the spatial scale of the body. Richard's experience begins to reveal the ways in which bodies remain topographical sites in the queer landscape. While it is important to take into account multiple interpretations of the social space of the Frontrunners and gay athletic culture, it is also necessary to assert that there is no "safety" in this space. This space is not removed from wider sociospatial relations within the everyday.

The Frontrunners: Safe for whom?

Membership

Membership and its relative lack of diversity is an issue that has been identified as an area of outreach by the International Front Runners organization and the Toronto Frontrunners. Through the IFR webpage, members are encouraged to participate in online discussions called "Frontrunner Forums" to discuss issues relevant to the running club. One topic listed in the "Talkback" section is how to seek new and more diverse members. Within this section the IFR outline the membership 'problem':

> A further problem many clubs face is that *to many outside* the clubs, "FrontRunners" (and its variant spellings) is synonymous with "fast", "white", and "male". Over the years, clubs have tried different things to try to *overcome this stereotype* and attract other groups of athletes: women, minorities, those living with HIV/AIDS, walkers, etc. Some have been very successful, some have not (http://www.frontrunners.org/ [emphasis added]).

It is interesting to note the way in which the International Front Runners identify the membership problem. The Frontrunners are overwhelmingly fast, white and male in membership. Yet, there is an apparent reluctance to recognize empirically generalizable patterns of inclusion and exclusion within this social space. Instead the issue identified is that 'outsiders' to the club have an inadequate understanding of the running club and its membership. It is essential that issues of inclusion are reframed. The Frontrunners is a space where power operates out of the lived experience of individuals and groups situated in asymmetrical social and political positions. In order to produce a more inclusive space for women, minorities, those living with HIV/AIDS, walkers, etc. the focus must shift from overcoming a stereotype to better understanding social categories of power. This shift necessitates adopting a contextual approach to the ways in which space is produced within the Toronto Frontrunners.

As I pointed out in chapter three and in earlier sections of this chapter, the Toronto Frontrunners are very invested in being a strong and competitive running club. Michael explains:

> *A big concern for the TFR…the membership has been very clear on the fact that they mainly just want some place to run. They just want to run on Thursdays and Saturdays. They like the occasional potluck, but they are not big on community outreach, they are not big on marching in the parade. They are not big on any of that. They just want to run with other good runners and all they want to have to focus on is running.*

Michael expressed what many members of the Toronto Frontrunners running club made clear. They want the Frontrunners to maintain its status as both a social and competitive running club, not as an organization that does outreach work within the gay community. This comment highlights the ways in which the Frontrunners reflect a sport culture that strives to meet rather than disrupt the demands of sport, including the production of *good* competitors (Shogan & Ford 2000).

Geographies of In/Exclusion

On the TFR webpage the running club describes itself as a group that is open to "competitive and recreational runners of all abilities - from novices to advanced competitive runners - for recreation, health and friendship …we run a variety of routes that can be tailored to your exercise level: comfortable, challenging or rigorous" (www.frontrunners.org/). With this statement the TFR profess a commitment to include runners of any ability. The one stipulation that the running club lists in some of its materials is that anyone who shows up to run with the TFR must be able to run, at minimum, 5 kilometers, which is the shortest distance offered for its Saturday run. This does restrict some runners who are not able to run the shortest distance. As Richard explained when he decided to join the Frontrunners: *I practiced all winter to make sure I could do my 5k at the gym and then I went for the first time.*

However, it is pace and the advanced level of runners within the club, not distance that is consistently mentioned as significantly impacting people's experiences in the club. Several of the advanced level runners celebrated that fact that the club provided them with the opportunity to train with other 'good' runners who could maintain a fast pace. Others described the pace of the runs as a barrier to some people's participation in the running club. Here are a just a few examples:

Ramona: *I had heard about the Frontrunners when I started running. I didn't start running [with the club] right away mostly because I wasn't a good enough runner to run with Toronto Frontrunners which is a really strong ...they are strong runners. And I am sure that will come up again actually because that's an important thing that they're good runners.*

The Frontrunners in Toronto are fast runners and there aren't very many women who can run that fast. So just keeping up is hard for them. I have always felt that if there was a critical mass of slower runners then we would have a group that would be more encouraging for women to join. ...But if you're a woman, you are going to fall back... that defeats the purpose of running with the group. Now the group has a policy of not leaving people behind that has been implemented.

It is interesting to juxtapose Ramona's excerpt in relation to the next two:

Andy: *I know we can be intimidating...because the group has always had the reputation of being a fast group.*

Cathy: *Do you think that this club will ever develop a walking group? Would that be something that would bring out a more diverse membership?*

Andy: *I know we have talked about it in the past... first and foremost we are runners. ...I know that Chicago has a large walking contingent but I don't see that happening here.*

—

Cathy: *What are the issues facing lesbians or other runners who have been out to run with the Frontrunners and haven't returned?*

James: *The core group is fast and the people who were slower stopped coming out. And the other thing that I find is that for many of us who have developed relationships within the group, we are not very open to other people. Like I really look forward to Saturday morning because I get to see my friends... So I think that people aren't necessarily being really outgoing and, unless you are a pretty good runner, you feel intimidated. You know you're not actually getting the support from a lot of people saying 'keep up, you'll be fine' or whatever.*

When I was on the executive we tried to come up with a number of strategies to try and address the problem. We had greeters for a while, so a member of the *executive would always greet the new runners and ensure that they had someone to run with ...but then again you kind of felt you were saddled with them you know. I don't know you just didn't want to go and run because you knew you were going to get stuck with somebody.*

Andy indicates that the walking club works in other cities but that the TFR is for runners "first and foremost". His statement reaffirms orthodox sport discourse, which values performance over participation and inclusion. One of the central issues with bringing new members into the club seems to be the threat of disruption. Several runners are unwilling to accommodate any disruption to the advanced level of running or to the established social dynamic in the club. James explains that the core group is tightly-knit and is not necessarily interested in meeting or running with new people, unless they happen to be strong runners. Ramona mentioned the club's new policy not to leave runners behind. Yet, James discusses how he, as a member of the executive, resented being the designated greeter which sometimes required that he run with a new person ("*you were saddled with them*"). These narratives begin to unpack the geographies of exclusion within the "safe" space of the Toronto Frontrunners.

> **Bathhouse raid angers lesbian community**
>
> Saturday, September 16, 2000
>
> TORONTO -- No charges have been laid, although police say some are pending as the investigation continues. The police collected the names and addresses of about 10 women and the event continued afterward.
>
> The all-night party at downtown's Club Toronto was the city's first lesbian bathhouse event in a year.
>
> Three hundred women packed the venue which is normally open only to men.
>
> "This is an outrage," said Toronto City Councillor Kyle Rae, who represents the ward where the bathhouse is located.
>
> "An outrage to a community that has established itself as equal but different. The police have not been into a bathhouse investigating a complaint in almost 20 years.
>
> "I'm shaking, I am so angry."
>
> There were plenty of livid women in the bathhouse when the five officers finally left after an hour and 15 minutes.
>
> "This constitutes harassment," said Michelle Hamilton-Page, 32, a consultant.
>
> "Clearly we were targeted."
>
> ...The bathhouse inspection took place just two days before a public meeting aimed at setting up a liaison committee between police and members of the gay, bisexual and transgender communities.
>
> (Nolen & Freeze 2000)

Most often people's experiences of exclusion go unnoticed within the club. Identifying forms of socio-spatial exclusion reveals the ways in which power is expressed in the monopolization of space (Sibley 1995). The terrain of the club is itself a political and cultural site that represents the contestation over space by differently empowered constituents. The entanglements of power within the TFR elucidate complex relations of domination and resistance. In other words, a space that some runners find oppressive others find appealing. The following sections trace out the process of boundary erection through multiple understandings and contradictions that exist within a counterspace that is intended for "gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders and their supporters" (IFR 2001).

The "Additive Model": Lesbians and the Toronto Frontrunners

In the TFR women make up only 10% of the paid membership and several of those who officially join the Frontrunners often do not consistently run with the club. The TFR executive has identified the "lesbian problem" as an area that needs to be addressed. It was also an issue that came up in each interview when I asked questions about the lack of diversity within the membership of the running club. The executive has made several attempts to bring more lesbian runners into the club. Some of the strategies have included advertising in Siren magazine (a Toronto lesbian magazine), having both a lesbian and gay runner as the designated contact person for the running club and by implementing "Lezzie Saturdays" one weekend a month. On "Lezzie Saturdays" all the TFR were encouraged to bring other lesbians runners to the group. None of these tactics have been successful in increasing the numbers of women who either register or run with the group.

I asked the following question during my interviews: "In terms of the club's efforts to diversify the membership, what do you see as some of the issues facing women runners in the club?" Here are some of the responses:

Ethan: *That is interesting because I was on the executive of the swim club and we had the same issue there – it was predominantly white gay men that were in the swim club just as it is predominantly in the Frontrunners. So what are the issues that face women? I think numbers is a big thing. They come to this group and it is all men. I think it is a little daunting to come and see all these men there. How* *comfortable would I be and would I be encouraged to come back? And I don't think I would.*

Ethan is aware that lesbians often feel excluded in the running club. He also acknowledges the lack of racial diversity in the both the gay swim club as well as the Frontrunners. His response, which reflected a consensus within the TRF, insists that there is a "numbers" problem. This response suggests that if more lesbians join the Frontrunners, offsetting the number of gay men in the group, then there would be more encouragement and support for lesbian runners. Similarly most gay male runners I interviewed were unaware of any other social dynamics at work in the running club that may alienate women. It was difficult for many to think beyond the "additive" solution.

Brad was much more frank in his reply to the question of issues facing women. His answer moves in a completely opposite direction:

Brad: *Oh misogyny (laughing). But I say misogyny and in some ways I mean it. It is amazing but it in some ways mirrors the Toronto community. Very often within the men's communities, and I think there are many men's communities, have often very little to do with women's communities.*

Brad linked the gender dynamic in the Frontrunners to the gay community at large. Indeed as Becky Ross (1995) has documented, lesbians in Toronto have struggled to establish a collective, public presence in the gay community. Brad's answer clearly uncovers the way in which space will always be claimed and contested (Taylor 1998). As feminist geographer Affrica Taylor argues, the "occupying of space is an assertion of power, and continual displacement is power's spatial effect" (1998:130). The social space of the Toronto Frontrunners does undermine hegemonic social control in terms of heterosexuality but not in terms of sexism. Gender displacement is one of the complexities and contradictions that emerge through entangled geographies of domination and resistance. The Frontrunners club does not secure a "safe" space for lesbians in the same way it does for white gay men. Rather the social space of the TFR simultaneously limits lesbians' inclusion as it purports to struggle to include more women runners.

A few runners acknowledged that pace is an issue that may limit the participation of lesbian runners. However, as Mark indicates in the following excerpt there is more at work in terms of gender than issues of pace.

Mark: *A lot of times they [women] are not as fast as the core fast group at Frontrunners so they are at a disadvantage socially in the first place. The second thing is that... because it is mostly men and a lot of times there is this sexual dynamic I think. Because what I see happening when a new runner shows up, you know if he is a male runner, then there is going to be more interest in that runner by the majority. They will make the effort to introduce themselves and get to know that person a bit at least on the first run to connect with that person. But not necessarily if it is a woman.*

Mark suggests that women runners are often ignored within the group and recognizes that this creates an isolating experience for lesbian runners. In several interviews gay runners discussed their own first experience with the Frontrunners and were struck by the friendliness and openness of the group. For example, Michael discussed his first run with the group and what he referred to as "*all that sort of fresh meat sort of talk*" that was centred around him[5]. I asked all the lesbian runners in the study what their social experiences were like in the Frontrunners.

Colleen has been running with the TFR for a few years and discusses how, when her gay male friend is not at the run, she often feels like an outsider.

Colleen: *I wasn't really aware that it [the Frontrunners] was as male dominated as it is. ...there have been times when I have run by myself. Because everybody is just running faster than I am ...I don't know I guess I don't always feel like being that social. It's work to break in with the guys. But I feel a little bit of pressure to stay on (the executive) because I don't know of any other women.*

... a lot of the women who run with the group I would identify as being really competitive good runners. I mean it's true. And I wasn't really aware of that fact when I joined it. Because I wouldn't put myself in the same category. I mean I do a little bit of racing but very little. And it is not ...it's never been a priority. So in terms of the women who are in the group there I think they are there because they

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[5] Several gay runners made it very clear during the interviews that, while there is a sexual dynamic within the group, there is not the same level of cruising that occurs in more commercial or

are real runners. And it's not... it's secondarily a social thing. And I think it's the reverse of equal those priorities for the men. Like it is very social for the guys. And a lot of times I feel kind of invisible. Like if there aren't other women or even if there is one or two of us I just feel like my presence is not crucial to what's going on... sometimes I just feel like an outsider at the run itself.

Diane provides another version of the Toronto Frontrunners. Diane only ran with the Frontrunners once and then chose not to return to the group. I asked what initially brought her out to run with the Frontrunners:

Diane: *I had been running with another club before, which was really mostly straight. You know a friend of mine who is a gay man ...we started running together and we decided that we wanted a club and wanted to pick up our pace a little bit. And we didn't want to go as far down into the straight world as the club that we had checked out. So we thought we'd check out the Frontrunners.*

...And then we went for one run on a Saturday morning and got left behind [laughing] because we are not that quick. But of course they were really nice, they did try and wait up for us. We thought we'd try it again but it just wasn't for us. They are a bit more competitive, a bit quicker and they really were like mostly fast guys.

Cathy: *How did you imagine the running club would be?*

'sexualized' gay social spaces.

Diane: *Well I imagined there would be more women and I imagined that there would be different paces. And a little bit more recreational. I mean the running clinic that I go to I paid money so I could actually improve my time and be a little more competitive at least with myself. But with a more recreational focus. I think I had hoped to find what the Frontrunners think of themselves as. I wanted to see different paces and more leisurely runs and a more diverse crowd and I didn't get that.*

Diane wanted to find a running club that that would provide her with a place to run that fit both her running ability and her social needs. She was not interested in running in a completely straight environment nor was she looking for a fast paced running club. She had anticipated that the Frontrunners would be a diverse running club both in terms of its membership and the ability of runners. Yet the Frontrunners were in her words "*all white guys, all wiry. Just real runners' bodies*" and she was left at the back of the pack. I asked Diane how she came to know about the Frontrunners running club. She learned about the club during the Pride and Remembrance Run, a 5 km run that is organized at the beginning of Gay Pride Week in Toronto. According to the Pride and Remembrance website, the purpose of that run is "to offer an enjoyable, healthy and constructive community event for Torontonians and out-of-town visitors, in conjunction with Toronto's Pride Week" (http://www.priderun.org/html/event.html). The event also raises funds for various organizations within the gay community.

Diane stated that the Pride run was one of the reasons that she wanted to run with the Frontrunners. She explains:

Diane: *It felt so powerful to be with a group like that. Like I cannot describe the feelings. I bombed in that 5k run I couldn't even... I could barely do it I was so excited at the start line. I couldn't believe how many women were out there. And I was jumping up and down and I got a really big cramp [laughing]. And I was like where are all these women the other 364 days of the year. You know why aren't they out running and joining groups and you know.*

Cathy: *Tell me more about that 5k run.*

Diane: *Unbelievable. Like every year it just gets bigger and bigger and bigger. And now I think it's just opening up to a much bigger community and that's good and I think it is opening up to far more straight people than I ever remember in the past. But the first year it was truly a community event. Like you just looked around and you thought, where have these people come from? You know and it was really something else, it was quite special. And I do remember thinking [laughs] where are all these women you know all the other times of the year. It just meant a lot to be around other lesbians.*

Quite simply Diane longed to be able to run and socialize with other lesbians. She was disappointed with the overall lack of diversity in the group. Where she had a peak experience and felt powerful running in the Pride and Remembrance Run, she was literally left behind with the Frontrunners. Women who are not competitive runners find themselves marginalized in the Frontrunners, a group that purports to be a 'safe' place for lesbian runners. This is a much different social space than Diane had imagined[6]. To recapitulate the central argument developed up to this point: although the Frontrunners is a counterspace that contains the possibility of dis-alienation and safety, it is also a space filled with power inequities and hierarchies that displace certain people.

Un(re)marked: Whiteness and the Toronto Frontrunners

Andy: *Toronto is a very multicultural city. Yet we are basically a white male running group.*

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[6] Diane had anticipated that the Frontrunners would provide an experience that was different than the 'straight' running club yet similar to the Pride and Remembrance run where there were lots of lesbians. Longing for change or difference is what Lefebvre refers to as a utopian impulse or moment. Different than a grand and unrealizable future utopia, Lefebvre understood utopianism as a sensibility or awareness of the possibilities of social change. Lefebvre stated that "[w]e are all utopians as soon as we wish for something different" (in Gardiner 2000:18). Lefebvre also described critical utopianism as being concerned with "what is and what is not possible. All thinking that has to do with action has a utopian element. Ideas that stimulate action, such as liberty and happiness, must contain a utopian element. This is not a refutation of such ideals; it is, rather, a necessary condition for the project of changing life" (1988:87). Lefebvre's articulation of utopia differed from Marx and Engels where alienation would end and equity would be achieved through the distribution of wealth (Shields 1999). Shields explains that Lefebvre reflected more Nietzschean and Bakhtinian orientations celebrating the "unquashable character of 'joy' and 'life'" (1999:35). As evidenced by Diane's ideas of what the running club would be like, representations of space or conceived space is the primary space of utopian thought (Soja 1996). Situated within a dialectical framework, Lefebvre outlined the dialectical relationship between "possible" and "impossible" (Lefebvre 1991). He argued that without the "impossible-possible" "there is no project, no action, conquest, reform. To obtain the least, one must think and will the most" (cited in Shields 1999:108). Diane's ideas of what the running club would be like are

Cathy: *What are your speculations about that?*

Andy: *I guess the social prejudice that face us as gay men in this society... at least it's our society and we are familiar with the rules and boundaries. I guess if you're a member of a visible minority the going is tougher. ...So maybe they are just not comfortable with...people of color are not comfortable with the whole issue of trying to find their own space. And maybe they just don't feel comfortable.*

In the preceding narrative, Andy recognizes the struggle for gay visible minorities at the same time that his whiteness serves as the panoptic centre, the point of reference for gay experience. In other words, Andy is aware that racial boundaries emerge and inform social practices of exclusion and inclusion but at the same time he suggests it is their 'discomfort' with 'our' society that is a barrier. This allows him to express empathy towards 'Others' in the absence of reference to whiteness and its "neutrality". This echoes statements in other narratives where the "good" social space of the Toronto Frontrunners is protected while lesbians and racial minorities are identified as the ones who need to overcome their perceptions of the group, or in this instance, not feeling comfortable in white space. Such superficial readings of differences make power relations invisible and keep dominant cultural norms in place.

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important as they point the way towards a different space, of a different mode of production that straddles the line between conceived and lived space.

Michael: *You know you walk in [to a gay gym] and you feel incredible; it's a welcome breath and you know it cuts a wide swath. You get a little bit of everybody, not your stereotypical fags, but you get everybody coming there and the Frontrunners is the same way. You know you take a snapshot of the Frontrunners; it's not what you are going to see in a magazine. It's totally different.*

Cathy: *It is still quite a homogenous group though in terms of racial diversity.*

Michael: *Totally. It's still very white, but I think the gay community is very much that way. You know it's very divisive. I mean you've got your fags and dykes and you've got Blacks and Whites and Asians. Just being gay is not enough of a commonality so they have to break down into smaller groups. We tried to do a lot of work to outreach to women this year. We have been doing it for a few years but we really made a big effort this year because we had two women on the executive for the first time. But man it's a hard road.*

Goldberg (1993) argues in Racist Culture that socio-spatial boundaries along lines of race are often an unnoticed feature of urban life. In the above passage, Michael responds to my comment on the lack of racial diversity in the TFR by acknowledging that the gay community is "divisive". Yet, it is important to note that Michael's acknowledgement is also a form of dis-acknowledgement. Michael recognizes the presence of a diverse group of sexual minorities in

Toronto (i.e. Blacks, Whites, and Asians), yet his narrative suggests that raced bodies are 'normally' separated from one another. There is no discussion or reflection about the ways in which boundaries are drawn between dominant and subordinate groups within the gay community. In Michael's words, "being gay is not enough of a commonality". The assumption is that whiteness is synonymous with 'sameness' and does provide grounds for inclusion. This statement also is what Sibley calls an "opaque instance of exclusion" (1995:1). Michael's response reflects a mainstream or majority perspective and represents taken for granted ways of viewing the excluded as routine. His reply works to conceal the ways in which social space is controlled and regulated in terms of race. Such responses avoid foregrounding any barriers or exclusionary practices at the same time that they foreclose any engagement with 'Other' gays as they are characterized as different.

There are three interrelated points I want to draw out of Michael's narrative. The first is that there is no consideration of the role the white gay runners play in defining the social character of space within the TFR. This allows exclusionary practices to go unnoticed. As Sibley (1995) explains in Geographies of Exclusion, any discussion of exclusion is also concerned with inclusion. Thinking about inclusion Michael quickly shifts the discussion from race back to gender. This discursive shift leads to my second point. Diane Bell (1991) proposes only privileged whites are in a position to delineate whether 'markers' like race or gender are of primary significance. In the preceding narrative, inclusion within the TFR is primarily conceived in terms of gender not race. The result is that efforts to diversify the group are focused on (white) women. The third related point I want to draw out of Michael's response establishes the process by which the white body becomes unmarked. As I elaborate, whiteness remains the un(re)marked sign of gay masculinity within the Frontrunners.

History and contemporary realities of oppression shape the invisibility of whiteness as a racial position with power. Richard Dyer (1997) explains that whiteness often offers itself as non-particular or as 'normal'. In the case of the Toronto Frontrunners, whiteness is one of the most significant features of the running club yet it takes up the position of "ordinary" in the context of the gay village. As Dyer observes, "to be normal, even to be normally deviant (queer, crippled), is to be white" (1997:12). The apparent unremarkability of whiteness works to hide the ways in which power relations deeply shape encounters and sustain existing spatial arrangements.

Dyer (1997) suggests that only by 'making whiteness strange' is it possible to begin to see the politics of whiteness. It is difficult to abandon simple cultural frames and move to a broader understanding of race and space without a critical examination of the alienating and racist environment of queer spaces. There is relentless ongoing racism in queer communities. Yet, whiteness retains its hegemonic position by becoming invisible (Rose 1993). This is particularly evident in work addressing sexuality and sport that often does not acknowledge or describe the effects of the simultaneous experience of homophobia and racism[7].

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[7] In reviewing the literature for this project I could not find any published articles that discuss 'race' and recreational running clubs in North America. Race is the focus of several articles on elite running (sprinting and long distance running) that debate genetic advantages and black

As an example, Pronger's (1992) The Arena of Masculinity, while noted for its contribution to the literature on sexuality and sport, fails to challenge white domination by asking how whiteness regulates the social space of gay sport. While unpacking "mythic masculine power," there is no critical discussion of the ways in which white gay athletes simultaneously benefit from complex operations of hierarchies of gender and race. Implicit in this work is the assumption that erotic environments in sport, "gay sensibility", and orthodox masculinity can be examined without the realization of white domination. A myth that remains fully intact in Pronger's work is that white gay masculinity is not implicated in the politics of race.

> [A]s an Indigenous woman, I could not find a positive place for myself in the predominantly White, gay scene. I looked there for support in my lesbian identity, and instead found another articulation of racism. Although a large number of gay and lesbian Indigenous people live in the city, the Indigenous community remains segregated from the mainstream, non-Indigenous gay and lesbian community.
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> … I cut my hair, as though proclaiming a new identity was enough to make me belong in the lesbian and gay community. I know that, in Cree tradition, we cut our hair when we are in mourning. When someone we love dies a part of ourselves die. It is a personal ceremony. The hair, usually in a braid, is buried in a quiet, safe place where no people or animals can step on or disturb it. There I was with a flattop, shaved on the sides and short, spiky, and flat on the top. My hair was everywhere on the floor of the flashy salon of a new-found friend. People were stepping on it, walking through it, and eventually it just ended up in the garbage alone with everyone else's. A connection with my community was buried in that garbage can.
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> (Alex Wilson 1996:312)

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runners. However, there is little discussion of social barriers, racial politics and participation in recreational or semi-competitive running.

How much more tenuous and vulnerable are social spaces for racially marginalized gay athletes? It is essential that those working in the area of sexuality and sport move beyond what Razack calls "'the race to innocence,' a belief that we are uninvolved in subordinating others" (1998:11). In order for white sexual minorities to recognize that they do not stand outside hierarchical social relations, it is necessary that interlocking systems of domination are acknowledged. Work by Gamal Abdel-Shehid (2000a, 2000b, 1999a, 1999b), Ben Carrington (1993) and Mary McDonald (2000) underscore the importance of fostering a specific intellectual and political exchange around universalizing discourses of whiteness, race and racialization in sport.

"G/L/B/T": A Harmonious, Empty Pluralism[8]

> Today the word transgender has at least two colloquial meanings. It has been used as an umbrella term to include everyone who challenges the boundaries of sex and gender. It is also used to draw a distinction between those who reassign the sex they were labeled at birth, and those of us whose gender expression is considered inappropriate for our sex.
>
> (Leslie Feinberg in Transgendered Warriors 1996:x)

Brad: *I don't know. Where do people find their space? It would be my hunch that especially if you are transgendered, I am thinking a running club is probably not the place that you are going to be the most at home.*

This section unpacks the Frontrunners' mission statement that includes "gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders" and discusses how vast differences between sexual minorities are often overlooked and ignored within the running club. Chandra Mohanty (1990) argues that apolitical, ahistorical cultural pluralisms like "multiculturalism" need to be disputed when they involve the implicit 'management' of difference in the name of harmony and inclusion. Without understanding the terrain of struggle faced by people located in asymmetrical power relations such 'commitment' to diversity fails. More precisely, the pluralistic appropriation of difference keeps intact existing spatial practices without critically interrogating or attempting to transform the contradictions and hierarchical power relations within the social organization of space.

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[8] The phrase "harmonious, empty pluralism" is taken from Chandra Talpade Mohanty's (1990) article, "On Race and Voice: Challenges for Liberal Education in the 1990s". In this article, Mohanty offers a critique of prejudice reduction workshops and the institutionalization of multiculturalism in the academy.

When I interviewed Richard, he had recently watched the film Iron Ladies at the 2001 Toronto International Film Festival. Iron Ladies depicts the 1996 Thai national championship volleyball team that was assembled out of transvestites, transexuals, drag queens, gay players and was coached by a lesbian. In the passage that follows Richard explains how the film impacted him:

Richard: *These queer effeminate men who are not supposed to be good at sports at all were kicking ass…all of a sudden I had this model of sports as being very liberating at the personal level and radical at the collective level. I wish Frontrunners was more like that.*

Richard's statement becomes all the more important in the context of the significance of sport for marginalized people. Sport is not merely the site of instruction, competition and play. It is also a political and cultural site that represents accommodations and contestations over bodies. Sport produces, reinforces, recreates, and resists ideas about race, gender, sexuality and other forms of difference. The Frontrunners does provide a space for 'some' marginalized bodies. However, as Richard observes the Frontrunners is not radically challenging or disrupting orthodox models of sport. Yet, the mandate of the running club suggests that the Frontrunners provides a safe place for gay, lesbian, bisexual and trangendered runners. This implies a sport geography unlike that of orthodox sport.

Mohanty explains that "[d]ifference seen as benign variation (diversity), for instance, rather than as conflict, struggle, or the threat of disruption, bypasses power as well as history to suggest a harmonious, empty pluralism" (1990:181). Similarly, the discourse of "difference" within the Frontrunners is not one of conflict, struggle or the threat of disruption. Rather the accommodation of difference within the mandate of the Frontrunners is a supplementary move that excludes non white, and non gay people even as it includes them. This pattern of "inclusion", which happens under the guise of "harmony in diversity" (Mohanty 1999:181), is a violent erasure of the actuality of space available to other kinds of subjects in Toronto's gay community.

Parents Want TG Student Barred From Girl's Washroom
(March 6 2002, Nanaimo, BC)
A parent's group is demanding that a high school, in Nanaimo, British Columbia, bar a transgendered student from using the girl's bathroom. ...The grade 12 student is undergoing sex reassignment. She dresses as a female and has adopted a female name. In December, she asked the principal for permission to use the girls' washroom. "We have medical documents saying the student should now be referred to as female," said Nanaimo-Ladysmith school superintendent Carola Lane. ...But, that isn't enough for Vicki Podetz, whose

son attends the school. She said she has concerns about "the comfort level of the female students… these are young girls, some as young as 13 years old." … Lane said school officials have met with the student's family in an effort to support the teen. …Podetz said she will press other parents and may take the board to court.

(Peters 2002)

Bylaws and Gender Outlaws

In the following excerpt, Brad discusses the struggle to introduce bylaws in the early 1990s that included other sexual minorities beyond gay and lesbian:

Brad: *During my first year as president, I introduced bylaws for the club… including the bylaw statements that we are a running club for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals and transgendered people. That was included in the bylaws quite intentionally and do you know what it was amazing the fuss people had with even, forget transsexual or transgendered, bisexual was a huge kerfluffle at the time to get that into the bylaws.*

We talk about growing and being inclusive but there is certainly a sub-strata where people are rigid, narrow-minded and not as inclusive as they like to pretend to be. So that is also our culture. People experience that in a variety of ways. I don't think people make women particularly welcome and comfortable in the club…. I mean if you came out and were new, all the old familiar faces just went off running and people got left on the trail. And people from other FR clubs used to say "Wow, this is really a fast club!" I think it was a euphemism for being unfriendly. Most other clubs I know have a very intentional and specific *social element or they would include Front Walkers for instance. This club is very intentional about not including walkers.*

I remember having to say to people when there was this big kerfluffle about the bylaws, "well there are no bisexuals in this group" and I had to say ...well I happen to be one you know and [laughs] I said that quite publicly. During my stint with the Frontrunners when I had separated from my first partner and surprise I fell in love with a woman. It certainly took me by surprise. But do you know during that whole time the Frontrunners was still significant, somehow I carved out a space for me. If I were less secure it would have been inhospitable. And the fact is that we have people in the club who have been married and have children and they would define themselves as being gay now. I mean that is the base *of the club. But you know what ...that is not widely acknowledged nor is it widely part of the conversation.*

As an executive member of the TFR, Brad wanted to create a more welcoming and inclusive space for runners. His attempt to create a more "plural" running club began with the creation of a bylaw that formally recognized bisexual, transexual and transgendered runners. What I find particularly interesting in his narrative is the way members voiced their opposition to this bylaw. While there was discord over formally including runners who were not gay or lesbian, Brad explains that it was the inclusion of "bisexual" to the bylaw that generated the most direct objections (*it was amazing the fuss people had with even, forget transsexual or transgendered, bisexual was a huge kerfluffle).*

I read the "silence" around transsexual and transgendered runners as a signaling the erasure of "trans" bodies from the social space of the running club. It is this "unimaginable" or missing transgendered body that I want to consider as being central to the normalizaton and territorialization of space within the Toronto Frontrunners. In the subsequent narratives I trace out the ways in which sexual diversity is "managed" within the "safe" social space of the running club.

> **Pussy Bites Back: Police feel the wrath after raiding an all-women bathhouse party**
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> This being the latest in a series of liquor inspections/sex raids, something else appeared to have changed with the convergence last week of hundreds of people on the steps of police headquarters calling for Police Chief Julian Fantino's head. "Even if these are just liquor license regulations, they are used as an excuse to come into the Pussy Palace and persecute us," says Women's Bathhouse Committee member Loralee Gillis, promising another event at Club Toronto soon.
>
> The issue is expected to highlight tonight's Take Back the Night march – starting with a 7pm rally at 220 Cowan. "We are not going to make concessions, and they'd damn well be ready for a battle," says Gillis. "We just want to say, 'Cops, you'd damn well better watch out, because pussy bites back."
>
> Voices like Gillis' got louder as a standing-room-only crowd met at the 519 Church Community Centre last Thursday. After personal accounts and rallying calls from everyone from prostitutes to suits, former police board member Olivia Chow was raising a $10,000 war chest to fight the charges when folks started talking about hitting the streets.
>
> The 519 erupted with calls for an impromptu march. …About 100 marchers were left by the time it started happening, but that didn't seem to matter as people trickled out of bars and restaurants to join in. Ever so politely, they blocked off the southbound lane on Cjurch, then just the westbound lane of College en route to police headquarters at Bay. By then, more than 400 people had tagged along.
>
> (Smith 2000)

Absent Bodies

Cathy: *The broader mandate of Frontrunners suggests that the club is open to g/l/b/t. Is there that kind of diversity in the running club?*

Richard: *Well with bisexuality it is really hard because there are issues of visibility and biphobia. Probably there are bisexuals but they don't bother mentioning it because then they always have to deal with all the questions and the* *debate that ensues. And transgendered... there haven't been any transgendered people I know who have gone. And I don't know...probably lots of reasons for that. But I would guess... I think Frontrunners has a real yuppie feel to it somehow. ...I know that the yuppie gay male scene can be very transphobic so I don't know if that has anything to do with it.*

Later in the interview Richard discussed curling in a gay league in Toronto. Although there were no individuals who identified as transgendered in the curling league, he explained that: "*there are more people who more obviously challenge gender boundaries – both men and women. I mean that just strikes me now. And curling, even though it costs more money than the Frontrunners, is much more of a working class sport somehow. Just in terms of who it attracts*".

Cathy: *Yes, running is usually quite a white-collar sport with lots of professionals.*

Richard: *Yes very professional. I think in terms of gender it [the Frontrunners] is quite a normalizing group. And I guess the only exception was, even though it wasn't with Frontrunners, the Pride & Remembrance run there were two guys who ran in drag. Did the whole thing in drag.*

Cathy: *What do you see happening if a transgendered person wanted to come out and join the group?*

Andy: *I don't know. I don't know any transgendered people to tell you the truth. I think they would be facing a whole host of issues that I wouldn't be familiar with. Although you'd think I would being a gay man and being outside the norm. But I really wouldn't have a clue. ...Not that it is a knock against the group but we have always been fairly homogenous - white, male homosexual and professional too.*

No trans-identified runners have ever been involved with the Toronto Frontrunners and it was difficult for participants to respond to questions about their absence. As an interviewer I was also not certain how to move beyond the admission of absence. For example, Andy acknowledges that there would be a host of issues facing a transgendered runner but he is not able to articulate what these issues may be. He is aware that his own experiences with marginalization and difference do not inform an understanding of trans in/exclusion. Looking back through the narratives, one of the interesting turns taken in these two responses was the indirect link to social class. Andy states that the running club has always been "fairly homogenous" – gay, white and professional. In his response Richard suggests that the "gay yuppie scene" could be very transphobic and "normalizing" regarding gender. Later, he contrasts the "yuppie" culture of the running club with what he identifies as a more working class culture within the gay curling club. The annual fee to run with the Frontrunners is $25/year. Curling fees are much higher to accommodate the rental of ice. Despite the higher costs associated with curling, Richard describes that group as being more "*working class somehow*" and as providing more obvious challenges to gender boundaries. While these answers do not necessarily trace out an understanding of the absent transgender body in the running club, they do lead me to consider how social class informs both the culture of running and the occupation of space as a means of social control within the Toronto Frontrunners.

Running in North America is a social activity that appeals to individuals from distinct class and educational backgrounds. This was evident in a study on recreational marathon running that examined participants in the New York City Marathon (NYCM) (Serravallo 2000). The NYCM is the world's largest marathon with over 30,000 participants. The study revealed that social class (based on occupation) and education are prime indicators of participation in recreational running. For example, in the 1998 NYCM the top five occupations of runners were administrator/manager, attorney, engineer, physician and teacher/educator. There is yet another distinction to consider. Males outnumbered females more than two to one. The author suggests a pattern of professional-managerial, highly educated men overrepresenting the NYCM (Serravallo 2000).

* * *

This section of chapter four was unquestionably the most difficult to write. In each of the interviews I raised questions about transgendered runners, in particular their inclusion in the mission statement and their absence from the Toronto running club. Most of the runners struggled to find answers. Many could not articulate or make sense of their absence in the club. Some responded by saying that they did not know any transgendered people. Others noted that transgendered people seemed

* * *

I consider this information important to this project because it suggests several things. Serravallo (2000) examines how the features and culture of the professional-managerial class accommodate running as they have access to the required time and space to train. In considering space he explains "[t]heir high pay means professional-managerials can live in second-tier suburban neighborhoods conducive to training runs, such as grass-covered open spaces, cleaner air, fewer cars and reduced risk of violent street crime" (2000:108). However, Serravallo then considers another explanation stating that "the interrelated class features of time, power and income are a much more useful explanation than geographical propinquity" (2000:109). In trying to listen through and theorize the absent transgendered body in the social space of the TFR I am left sifting through notions of class in order to determine how this might inform an understanding of this absence.

Viviane Namaste (2000) argues in Invisible Lives: The Erasure of Transsexual and Transgendered People, the everyday life circumstances of transgendered people are often missing from academic inquires. In particular she insists that most investigations into the lives of transgendered people neglect the social and economic conditions in which they live. Namaste also explains that

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invisible within gay community, outside of the drag queens who were hypervisible during Pride Week or performing in regular drag shows. In the countless times I have reread each of the interview transcripts I am increasingly aware of the way drag became conflated with transgendered. I now read this conflation as one of the

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"[t]ransgendered people are in jeopardy in both "ordinary" public spaces and in those designated as lesbian/gay" (2000:147). If we attempt to actually *engage* with differences rather than simply *acknowledge* them through empty pluralisms, using the language of diversity (g/l/b/t/), it is necessary that the lives and the everyday concerns of transgendered people are considered.

In returning to Serravallo's positioning of social class and gender as informing the culture of running, several other profound implications surface for people who live outside normative sex/gender relations when thinking about recreational running (or any other sport geographies for that matter). For example, Serravallo (2000) states that access to both safe spaces (reduced risk to violent street crime) and spaces conducive to training are central to recreational running. In terms of "ordinary" public spaces, how does access to urban environments, like the street, impact choices about participating in running and/or running clubs for transgendered people? Setting geographical propinquity aside, how do the interrelated class features of time, power and income impact transgendered people? Without making any conflated assumptions about educational and occupational backgrounds of Toronto's transgendered

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numerous ways that transgendered people are erased within the everyday. Richard stated that during the Pride & Remembrance run two runners ran the entire 5K race in drag. In subsequent interviews, when participants were struggling to respond I would often ask about the two 'drag' runners from the Pride and Remembrance Run

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community, it is important to consider what kind of *cultural* capital transgendered people would hold in a social space dominated through a collective identity (white, gay and professional) that feigns social inclusion?

Transgendered people are undoubtedly overlooked, excluded and ignored within the gay "community". Indeed Namaste contends that "most cities have separate geographical areas known for transgendered people and lesbian/gays[9]" (Namaste 2000:147). Beyond sport and physical activity, there are much larger questions at stake in terms of transgendered individuals and how they are excluded from spaces such as Toronto's gay village. Yet it is important that inquires into physical activity and sport for sexual minorites recognize the entangled power relations operating in the lives of transgendered youth and adults. Transgendered bodies are repeatedly overlooked within cultural studies of sport, except when framed in terms of gender verification tests and high

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hoping that this would help them to flush out a response by considering how the "drag" runners might be received within the TFR. Often the responses indicated that drag was acceptable, even celebrated, as long as it was intended as pure spectacle. For example one runner stated that *"it would be odd in that context (the Frontrunners). I think that in the Pride and Remembrance run its okay because it is a celebration and is something unique".* The questions I asked about runners in drag, and the answers that often followed, work as a form of erasure. Namaste (2000) explains that drag

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performance sport[10], in which case the focus is on establishing if and how the 'altered' body will unfairly and irreparably disrupt the sport and its "normal" participants.

In the excerpt that opens this section, Brad asserts that if you are transgendered then "*a running club is not the place that you are going to be the most at home*". Thinking about the bodies that are "at home" in the running club reveals the struggle over space, identities and social control. Healthy, fit, white, gay and professional is 'normal' within the running club. The bodies that occupy the social space of the club are always "monied" bodies, they are bodies with a certain level of income, education and employment. As several narratives have asserted, there is equal importance placed on how these bodies "perform" as runners and how the space of the running club can be protected to maintain this

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is tolerated by gays and lesbians as long as it remains in a space clearly designated for performance, such as at a Pride run. The containment of gender transgression in such a way works to reduce drag and those wearing it to entertainment (Namaste 2000). The interview transcripts reveal how transgendered people were only "imagined" in terms of drag and never outside of a space clearly designated as performance/entertainment.

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[9] Namaste explains that transgender areas are not tied to a notion of a resident as in the case of gay ghettos. Urban areas that are identified and known for transsexuals and transgendered people are usually only visible at night. See Namaste 2000:135-156.

[10] The most examined case involving a transgendered athlete involved tennis star Dr. Renee Richards. Born Richard Raskind, Richards legally became a female and began competing in women's tennis at age 43, after hormone replacement therapy and sex reassignment surgery. She attracted world-wide attention in 1976 when she sought exemption from the Barr-body gender-verification test, adopted by the International Olympic Committee and other sports organizations in the late 1960s to prevent athletes with male musculature from competing as females. Richards eventually won the case and competed as a woman in the 1977 United States Open Tennis Championship.

end. Running, particularly at an advanced level with a fast pace, requires a certain kind of body with a certain style and form. The Frontrunners' body is "able" to maintain the same temporal rhythm of others. Opening up the group to other paces also means opening up the group to other bodies and by extension other identities and gender possibilities. The Frontrunners' mission statement can "safely" make the appeal for diversity and inclusion within is membership without any disruptions to the occupation of space within the running club. Such an ability to define and control space is fundamentally political. In other words, it is a means of social control.

Moving On: Merging With The Street

Lefebvre's dialectical approach challenges the idea of a single or simple understanding of social space. By engaging in a dialectical process, and letting contradictions surface and rub against each other, it becomes possible to examine critical issues that shape inequality within spaces designated as "safe" and "healthy" for sexual minorities. In particular this chapter has sought to problematize taken-for-granted understandings of "safe" and "healthy" which are falsely premised on notions of inclusion. Investigating the spatiality of social relations within the Toronto Frontrunners requires understanding the ways in which space is the active medium through which the relations of domination and resistance are struggled over. The next chapter turns to more closely examine the entanglements of power within the streetscapes of the gay village.

Chapter 5

Abstract Space, Streetscapes and Cartographies of Power

> Streets are the terrain of social encounters and political protest, sites of domination and resistance, place of pleasure and anxiety.
>
> Nicholas Fyfe in Images of the Street (1998:1)

> The problem of the vagrants, panhandlers and bums who plague our neighborhoods and commercial districts can be controlled, if there is the political will to do it… People do not have the right to live on our streets or in our parks. Proliferation of vagrancy is a problem of law enforcement, and should be dealt with accordingly… The free ride is over in San Francisco.
>
> A San Francisco mayoral candidate, 1995 (in Daly1998:122).

The first chapter of this dissertation included a brief tour through Church Street, the commercial spine of Toronto's gay village. This chapter settles back into the streets of the gay village to establish the importance of the street to wider theoretical questions about urban space, social identities and social practices. To begin this exploration, Lefebvre's notion of abstract space will be used to theorize public space, its relationship to identity, and to consider how queer bodies move through and occupy public space. After outlining the importance of streetscapes to urban spaces, I then turn to focus on the ways in which the street can provide sites for very different experiences for sexual dissidents. In other words, this chapter examines how social and sexual identities are shaped, regulated and resisted through the social space of the city.

> As one who lived through the 1981 bathhouse raids (I was charged and finally acquitted…) …When are we going to take back our streets instead of being a bunch of whiny sissies who are afraid of breaking a nail. I say, enough is enough. No more shit.
>
> (Fay 2000:9)

The Phantom Public Sphere

Some consider "public" space to be in a crisis while others regard it as a fiction, something that never was[1] (Robbins 1993). Within this chapter my use of the term "public" is contextualized through a Lefebvrian notion of abstract space in order to consider the ways in which public space is produced, occupied and used. My position is further grounded by the writings of feminist scholars such as Iris Marion Young (1987) and Nancy Fraser (1997) who have challenged the binary of public and private and have raised important questions about exclusions that have always existed within the public sphere. My understanding of public space is also informed by postcolonial and queer readings of space that reject the notion that there is a single, central public.

The contemporary conflict over public space was addressed in a special issue of Philosophy and Geography titled "The Production of Public Space" (1998). The editors, Andrew Light and Jonathan Smith, explain that public space is a:

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[1] Walter Lipman (1925) wrote The Phantom Public which was followed by several other critiques of publicness, perhaps most notably, Jurgen Habermas's (1989) Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Robbins 1993). The concept of the public sphere harkens back to the eighteenth century bourgeoisie and the public square as a place for discussion, politics and criticism of the state. It was literally a place where 'public' opinions were formed and shared. As outlined by Katharyne Mitchell (2000b) the subject of public space and its relationship to identity formation and to politics continues to be studied by urban geographers (eg., McDowell 1997, Harvey 2000, Zukin 1995 and Mitchell 2000a). In

> space to which all citizens are granted some legal rights of access. This is the sense of the word expressed in designations such as public lecture, public transportation, public telephone… These rights are never absolute. For instance, they are normally limited to the right to occupy public space for a finite time and to engage in certain unavoidable exchanges with the environment (1998:3).

What is clear from the above explanation of publicness is that space is organized with particular restrictions. There is a remarkable irony here. While public space is legally open to all citizens it can only be occupied on certain terms, and these terms often make public space inaccessible for those who are not considered social equals (Fraser 1993). For instance, those who cannot afford 'public' transportation or the use of a 'public' telephone are denied access. These prosaic examples highlight some of the conditions that regulate the 'users' of space. In our mundane everyday spatial practices we encounter public spaces that are highly regulated. The street, for example, is one such space that is regulated both by formal agencies of control, such as the police, and indirectly through planning, design and surveillance (Fyfe 1998).

Lefebvre (1991) explains that public spaces, such as the street, presuppose the existence of a 'spatial economy' that imposes reciprocity and a commonality of use. He explains that:

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On a recent trip to Toronto, I noticed one of the ways that design is used to regulate what kind of social encounters can take place in the street. On the sidewalk outside of a lavish art centre, where many of the pedestrians are affluent, the city has covered the street grates with a chimney preventing homeless people from huddling around or laying on the sidewalk grates for warmth in cold weather.

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this chapter I am also concerned with everyday public spaces. In particular I am interested in how social identities and social practices are shaped by people's experiences of the street.

> this economy valorizes certain relationships between people in particular places (shops, cafes, cinemas, etc.), and thus gives rise to connotative discourses according to which, for example, such and such a place is supposed to be trouble-free, a quiet area where people go peacefully and have a good time, and so forth. As for denotative (i.e. descriptive) discourses in this context, they have a quasi-legal aspect which also works for consensus: there is to be no fighting over who should occupy a particular spot; spaces are to be left free, and wherever possible allowance is to be made for 'proxemics' – for the maintenance of 'respectful' distances (1991:56).

Lefebvre continues to outline a logic of property in space that is defined largely through consumption. Although public space functions on the tacit agreement of its 'users', Lefebvre points out that the spatial economy is not neutral or innocent, but produces widely different grades of access for particular bodies[2]. In essence the spatial economy operates via consensus and works by maintaining a strategy of belonging and displacement. Lefebvre explains that: "[t]here are beneficiaries of space, just as there are those excluded from it, those 'deprived of space'; this fact is ascribed to the 'properties' of a space, to its 'norms'" (1991:289). As a result there are bodies and movements that transgress or are 'out of place' within 'shared' spaces.

Similarly, Goldberg (1993) discusses how racial exclusions become institutionally normalized in and through spatial configurations within cities. He explains that spatial practices, such as ghettoization, limit people in terms of location and access "to power, to (the realization of) rights, and to goods and services" (Goldberg 1993:188). In other words, the increasing privatization and commodification of public space circumscribes people's movement and increasingly regulates, not only the use of space, but who the 'users' may be. Lefebvre considers this space to be *abstract*. Lefebvre's writing on abstract space provides a means through which to critique how social relations are expressed spatially and provides a strategic awareness of spatiality that is needed to understand, resist and transform its social and spatial consequences.

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[2] Public space has a much different meaning for monied bodies in comparison with poor and homeless bodies who are often denied the use of public space. Public space is regulated in such a way that it accommodates consumers at the same time that it declares off limits 'undesirable' elements of society such as transient bodies that loiter, sleep or urinate in public areas (Daly 1998).

Abstract Space

Lefebvre (1991) identified the historical transition between three different forms of spatiality: absolute space, historical space, and abstract space[3]. Each of these forms has specific spatial and social practices as its content. The current spatial stage in Western capitalist societies is abstract space, which Lefebvre argues is produced from capitalism and neocaptialism[4]. As a result it is abstract space that needs to be negotiated "in order to imagine a less exploitative experience of space, one that respects the claims of political and social difference" (Casey 1998:73). The following section begins to unpack some of the

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[3] *Absolute spaces* are areas settled and socialized for various reasons of environment, location and resources and were defined socially by investments of symbolic meaning, which hinged for the most part on religion and politics (Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre writes, "Absolute space was made up of fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountain top, spring, river), but whose very consecration ended up by stripping them of their natural characteristics and uniqueness" (Lefebvre 1991:48). Further politicization and the emergence of cities led to *historical space*. Smith explains that historical space accomplished a separation between production and reproduction and is marked by other social differences according to function (division of labor), gender, and territory as well as the origins of property and economic accumulation" (1998:57). The remnants of absolute and historical space remain and are subsumed under abstract space.

[4] Abstract space is produced via capitalism and neocapitalism, "which includes the 'world of commodities', its 'logic' and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state. The space is founded on the vast networks of banks, business centres and major productive entities, as also on motorways, airports and information lattices" (Lefebvre 1991:53).

complexities of abstract space and focuses on the ways it segments, orders and territorializes space for the purpose of production, exchange and social control.

Strategies of Abstract Space

The dominant strategy of abstract space involves the intrusion of commodified and bureaucratized space into the space of everyday life and experience (McCann 1999). Lefebvre argues that under neo-capitalism space has become a commodity, an essential site for the reproduction of capitalist social relations. In order for space to become a commodity, it must be both homogenized and fragmented[5] (Lefebvre 1991). Lynn Stewart explains that the homogenization and fragmentation of space "is promoted by the need for commodities to be exchangeable. Exchange demands comparability, interchangeability; hence the 'parcellization' of space into homogenous blocs" (1995:614).

Homogenization and fragmentation can be seen most clearly in cities, where the commodification of space (i.e., the *exchange* value of space) dominates the *use* value of space (Stewart 1995). As a result there are an abundance of single-use spaces where activities are highly differentiated. For example work, residence and leisure generally occur in clearly designated and separate spaces (Stewart 1995). This homogenizing and fractured space is further fashioned into numerous quantitative systems and subsystems. Lefebvre (1991) provides the following examples: the transportation system; the tertiary sector; the school system; the work world with its attendant (labour) market; organizations and institutions; and the money market with its banking-system (p.311). Overall Lefebvre considers the city an arena of struggle between everyday life and the abstracting forces of capitalism.

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[5] Lefebvre argued that Picasso's paintings parallel the commodification of space in the way they abstract the body. He suggests that within Picasso's art is a visualised space framed through the "dictatorship of the eye – and of the phallus …Picasso's cruelty toward the body, particularly the female body, which he

In addition to everyday life becoming increasingly dominated by the mass production of commodities there is also a loss of the independent identities of places (Dimendberg 1998). This loss was highlighted in Eric Schlosser's (2001) best selling book Fast Food Nation. Schlosser outlines how the demand for standardized products have wiped out small businesses and obliterated regional differences. He explains that:

> America's main streets and malls now boast the same Pizza Huts and Taco Bells, Gaps and Banana Republics, Starbucks and Jiffy-Lubes, Foot Lockers, Snip N' Chips, Sunglass Huts and Hobbytown USAs. Almost every facet of American life has now been franchised or chained (2001:5).

The uniformity created through franchises and chain stores has effectively erased distinctions between different communities. This erasure is a product of abstract space.

Neil Smith explains that within the processes of abstract space neo-capitalism "aspires to the possibility of infinite mobility, global hegemony" (1998:57). Which is to say that within abstract spaces the tendency towards homogenization exercises pressure in multiple ways. Specifically, Lefebvre claims that within abstract space is the disappearance of qualitative distinctions (i.e. local particularities) found in everyday life which are replaced by abstract commodity forms, which empty daily life of its lived, affective meanings and

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tortures in a thousand ways and caricatures without mercy, is dictated by the dominant form of space, by qualities (Gardiner 2000). Through mass production, economic rationalization, urban planning, economists, bureaucrats and controlled mass consumption our experience as citizens is increasingly regulated and determined.

The ability to define and control public space is fundamentally political in orientation; it is the central component of social control (Lefebvre 1991). The right to define and represent public space and the culture of public space is fundamentally about who belongs in it. Eugene McCann (1999) examines racialized geographies in U.S. cities through the lens of abstract space[6]. He explores how the production and maintenance of "safe" public spaces in U.S. cities is fundamentally related to representations of racial identities and to an ongoing process in which identity and material urban spaces exist in a mutually constitutive relationship. By examining the practices through which capital and the state secure urban public space, particularly downtown streets, he reveals how downtown business spaces are sanitized, made safe and appealing for White, middle class males. McCann argues that the continuing process of homogenization in the downtown landscape reflects the denial of racial differences[7] within abstract space.

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the eye and the phallus – in short, by violence" (1991:302).

[6] As noted earlier in this project and as raised by McCann (1999), Lefebvre glaringly omits the role of racial identities in urbanism.

[7] McCann (1999) examines the city of Lexington, Kentucky and its racially segregated landscape. He traces the development of the downtown financial area that once was a major regional slave market. He explains that the undifferentiated abstract space of the downtown results from the erasing of African-American history from the public collective memory (through the absence of any memorials or markers of the suffering and subjugation of Blacks) in addition to policies of downtown development that displaced several African-American 'clusters' from the urban core. What remains is a white, commercial and financial district that "enforces normative definitions of space in order to maintain the segregation of people into functional and hierarchical ghettos" (McCann 1999:171).

Abstract space attempts to suppress differences and maintain the illusion of coherence and unity (Lefebvre 1991). In other words, abstract space appears ahistorical, devoid of any indications of the social struggles around its production. It is equally important to note that abstract space papers over differences not only between places but also between bodies (Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre emphasizes that abstract space is filled with "centres of wealth and power, [and] endeavors to mould the spaces it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there" (1991:49). Although this space largely operates via consensus and appears safe there is also the threat and the occasional eruption of violence[8]. Yet, in spite of attempts to eradicate all uncontrolled and unpredictable difference, a plurality of 'differentiated' spaces (counterspaces) continues to exist as abstract space is dialectical and contains numerous internal contradictions.

Personal Email
Subject: On the street...
From: Cathy van Ingen
To: Heather J. Sykes
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2000 8:34 AM

hey you,
i wanted to phone you so badly when i got home last night ... while i was waiting to meet one of the runners for an interview outside the 519 community centre on Church Street...i happened to stumble upon a community forum being held in response to the police raid on the women's bathhouse. damn i completely wanted to postpone the interview but i was at least able to attend some of the meeting.

after just over $9000 was raised for the defense fund from the 200 people at the meeting, the floor was opened for individuals to speak. the passion and anger just spilled out... some went back to the police raids on the men's baths in 1981, others encouraged women to keep having 'that kind of sex', key politicians were discussed who often used the gayghetto for campaigning purposes, the disbelief that the raid would follow the establishment of a gay, lesbian, bi, transexual police liaison committee that was only formed a few nights before the incident, explicit links were made to the targeted policing and harassment of so many marginalized communities in Toronto, the upcoming Take Back The Night march was discussed, some women's talked openly about their fears of further police retaliation (this seemed to be voiced most strongly by women who were butch/trans or sex workers) when the suggestion that each of the 300 women at the bathhouse file a formal complaint to the police. repeatedly people stated that they wanted to 'take it to the streets'. some people wanted to wait until a safer environment could be arranged with marshals, a few of the women on the bath house committee even asked that any protest be postponed as there was already one woman waiting for her charges to be laid against her. a vote was taken and the strong majority wanted to do something now. quickly a decision was made about which police station to march to. a small group wanted to limit the protest to the local station (the 52nd division) which some felt would be safer, but the majority insisted on walking further along Yonge Street and marching to police headquarters. people were told to meet outside in 15 minutes, everyone with cellphones was calling to get more people involved, all of the 4 major media outlets where called (they had been at the meeting but left after a few photo-ops and soundbytes). as we marched down Church Street the cry was for others to leave the bars, the coffee shops and join in.

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[8] Lefebvre considers capitalism "the advent of generalized violence" (1991:290) and that "*there is a violence intrinsic to abstraction,* and to abstraction's practical (social) use (emphasis in original 1991:289)

as we moved through the streets i noticed that a few others had joined in. i could not stop taking these sweeping glances over the crowd, the bodies that had dissolved with intention, shared action and the way we overwhelmed the street, the evening traffic. there are only a few times when i have had that sense of occupation – moving with the pulse of a group to challenge so many other rituals of occupation. in some ways we were a sloppy spectacle - not as polished as an organized march, there were few placards, not enough loud speakers. but that didn't really matter - what did was the way the street became available for new inscriptions - political and sensual. moving through the material to ignite change - the awareness that we were this unstable group in so many ways ... a few men in suits, women/men in leather, wealthy, poor and the ways we reworked the image of the street for a short time. absolutely engaging in space reflectively. when we arrived at HQ there was some hesitation, some of the group took to the stairs and front entrance while others hesitated and remained on the street. one of the bath house organizers with one of the few loud speakers told the group that it was okay to "claim your space". the crowd moved off the street and closer to the police buildings. the chanting intensified ..."pussy fights back" and "no more shit" among others. two women climbed on top of the moose decked out in police garb, straddling on top, they pressed their bodies into each other and began kissing. some in the crowd began to kiss the person they were next too. two of the bathhouse organizers talked, a few men spoke - one in drag. then two

> women who had been detained by the police and questioned for 20 minutes spoke. they told how the police kept them separated from the others, searched through their clothes, gave them a long look over, took down their names, description, height and, employment info. They were then free to leave the room they were in and there were no formal charges laid against them. one of the two women sang to the cops while they were being questioned. one of the organizers remained outside the door - just waiting. right then 4 cops who had been waiting in their cars got out and stood at a distance. the crowd turned to them and yelled "Shame, Shame, Shame". soon after as the rally was ending, everyone was urged to leave in groups and not take the subway alone, as we walked away several other police cars circled. people continued to walk together leaving in small groups but it became even clearer as we left we were giving back more than the pavement.
>
> (van Ingen 2000)

Three Formants of Abstract Space

Abstract space operates in a highly complex way, particularly as it often conceals the way in which it functions. Lefebvre (1991) identifies three elements or "formants"[9] which define abstract space: the geometric, phallic and visual formant. The geometric formant yields an impression of neutrality, a space of reference unsullied by political motivation and planning. It does this by reducing three-dimensional space to two dimensions, for example through maps, blueprints, or any graphic representation. The phallic formant is a more obvious reminder of power symbolizing both force and constraint (Lefebvre 1991; Stewart 1995). It is an obsession with verticality and symbolizes "the dominance of masculine forces, the power of the corporation and the state" (Stewart 1995:614). The visual formant is the one that Lefebvre highlights as being the most pervasive and to which now I briefly turn.

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[9] Lefebvre borrows the term 'formant' from acoustic theory (Dimendberg 1998).

Lefebvre (1991) argues that abstract space is dominated by a visual logic that is based on images and simulations as well as the social importance of the written word. The visual is given priority over impressions gained from taste, smell, touch and hearing. What Lefebvre continually reiterates in The Production is that social space cannot be accurately accounted for by vision therefore it is important not to rely soley on vision to understand the ways space can be produced. Cities, in particular, have a pronounced visual character and appear deceptively transparent making it difficult to understand particular dimensions of social and spatial relations within them. He explains:

> They are made with the visible in mind; the visibility of people and things, of spaces and of whatever is contained by them. The predominance of visualization (more important than 'spectacularization', which is in any case subsumed by it) serves to conceal repetitiveness. People *look*, and take sight, take seeing, for life itself. We build on the basis of papers and plans. We buy on the basis of images. Sight and seeing, which in the Western tradition once epitomized intelligibility, have turned into a trap: the means whereby, in social space, diversity may be simulated and a travesty of enlightenment and intelligibility ensconced under the sign of transparency (1991:75-76; cited in Brown 2000:62).

The logic of visualization maintains the illusion that things are exactly as they look (Stewart 1995). As space becomes conflated with visualization, it deflects our attention from the broader social forces that have produced space (Brown 2000). It is important when considering city streetscapes and the spatial economy, that one does not take the 'innocent' positioning of the flaneur, the street wandering free agent (Soja 1996). The flaneur, of French poet Baudelaire and who remerges in the writings of Walter Benjamin and Michel de Certeau among others, suggests a form of detached gazing (Munt 1998). The fleeting presence of the street poet or flaneur requires a level of social mobility that must be acknowledged as privilege. In addition, there remains the ocular trap whereby corporeal experience is reduced to the visual. Lefebvre (1991) warns that urban landscapes in particular are often seductively reduced through a touristic delusion of understanding a place completely, even though one is just passing through. This chapter is less about claiming a particular knowledge of the gay ghetto and more about examining some of the power relations produced in and through its streetscapes. I am specifically interested in how the Frontrunners are aware of and understand their bodily, intersubjective engagements within the gay village. Once again instead of creating a system of narrative coherence with the narratives, I am particularly interested in the kinds of contradictions that surface and the ways in which abstract space limits or denies meaningful entrance or 'use' of this social space.

Abstract Space, the Gay Ghetto and the Commodification of 'Queer'

> Just as white light, though uniform in appearance, may be broken down into a spectrum, space likewise decomposes when subjected to analysis; in the case of space, however, the knowledge to be derived from analysis extends to the recognition of conflicts internal to what on the surface appears homogenous and coherent – and presents itself and behaves as through it were.
>
> (Lefebvre 1991:352).

Sexually segregated landscapes, such as gay ghettos, are worth interrogating, because they shed light more generally on the production and representation of gendered, classed, sexualized and racialized geographies in urban cities. In The Production of Space, Lefebvre does not differentiate between different forms of sexuality and urban space (Blum & Nast 1996; Brown 2000).

However, by distinguishing between the heterosexism of his theoretical framework and what his analysis reveals about the functioning of capitalism and identity, it is possible to consider the ways in which abstract space functions in the lives of sexual minorities and in the production of space in capitalist society.

One of the many contradictions of abstract space is that it both celebrates and denies the sensual and the sexual (Lefebvre 1991). For example, Lefebvre outlines the way that personal and intimate sexual relations are largely relegated to the private sphere of the residence (Brown 2000). Yet, there is also a sex industry where public spaces, such as red-light districts, are produced for the commodification of sex. In addition to these sexual geographies, Lefebvre also examines how representations of space, such as advertising images, sexualize and commodify the body through visual fragmentation. In particular, he cites the abstraction of the female body in images "where the legs stands for stockings, the breasts for bras, the face for make-up, etc." (1991:310). He clearly outlines ways in which "the female body is transformed into exchange value, into a sign of a commodity and indeed into a commodity *per se*"[10] (1991:310). As outlined by Lefebvre, abstracting capitalist forces impact both spaces and bodies as the everyday is permeated by exchange relations that increasingly mediate, impact and alter the experiences of users.

Early in the evening of Friday, August 25th 2001 a group of five dancers wearing Levi's new Engineered Jeans arrived on the corner of Church and Maitland as part of a city-wide grassroots marketing campaign.

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[10] Within abstract space the representation of sex often takes the place of sex itself (Lefebvre 1991).

At approximately the same time 12 members of a queer youth theatre group called *Vitamin Q* was beginning its "history-inspired walking tour" with performances and visual art. The performance was part of a 12-week summer project where the youth researched queer history in Toronto, including The Body Politic gay-liberation newspaper, the bathhouse raids, the AIDS memorial, and the history of lesbian bars. The performance involved actors leading an audience through the gay village, beginning at the Cawthra Park AIDS Memorial, 519 Church, past the infamous step of the Church Street Second Cup and finishing up at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre. The *Vitamin Q* performance involved skits, monologues, improv and dance pieces reflecting the villages history.

On Friday evening, leading an audience of 100, the *Vitamin Q* performers had stopped at The Steps on Church Street to discuss "the infringement of corporate culture on gay society" (FAB). As the theatre tour progressed walking along the street the two groups, *Vitamin Q* and the Levi dancers, met on the sidewalk. An article in FAB magazine reports that "Director Franco Boni decided his [*Vitamin Q*] performers …weren't going to compete for sidewalk space with the Levi's dance pack. He confronted a woman involved with the Levi's show who refused to stop the dancers. She then started taking pictures of Boni and others involved with *Vitamin Q*". FAB continues to report that Boni, who had stepped into the middle of the group of dancers, was physically removed. A confrontation escalated before the Levi dancers made a "beeline for their truck" with the audience booing. A spokesperson for Landon Starr Ketchum, the public relations firm responsible for the Levi dancers, called the incident a misunderstanding and apologized to the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre manager.

(Todd 2001)

The Social Geography of Church Street

Lefebvre argues that the urban, the body, and the everyday are particularly vulnerable to abstract space (Stewart 1995). This section examines how streets as specific, local landscapes, are central to the making and meaning of urban space, bodies and the everyday. Streets are embodied spaces with lives, relationships and memories inscribed across their surfaces. Streets resonate as spaces for passive consumerism, protest, crime, cruising, and walking. They are spaces of tension and conflict as well as places of pleasure and escape. While city streets do frame sexual dissidents' experiences of the city, it is important to recognize that the street is a heterosexual space. As Valentine argues, the street is produced as heterosexual and "the production of 'authentic' lesbian and gay space is relegated to the margin of the 'ghetto' and the back street bar and preferably, the closeted or private space of the 'home'" (1996:146-7).

> Pride Day has been open, public, and political. On that day we own the streets, the parks, the public transit system. We wear Gay Pride buttons. We salute each other in our tens of thousands. Straight sympathizers take part. Once again the police generally recognize our right to these spaces for that day; whole sections of the "gay ghetto," on Church Street one block over from Yonge Street are blocked off from traffic. For that day, the gay use of public space is legitimate
>
> (Grube 1997:140)

Public spaces, particularly city streets, are the epitome of abstract space (McCann 1999). It is the homogenous matrix of capitalistic streetscapes within the gay ghetto that is the focus of the remainder of this chapter. Specifically I attempt to trace through the visual surface and the illusory coherence of the street in order to unpack the spatial experience of its users. Drawing from narratives with the Toronto Frontrunners, I examine the meaning and significance of the street in relation to social identities and social practices. In particular, I pay attention to the occupation of space in the gay village and consider which bodies are particularly susceptible to the onslaught of abstract space. Finally, drawing on previous discussions of resistance, I consider how abstract space resonates with and contributes to current discussions of identity, resistance and urban sexualities.

Church Street...it really is a little sanctuary down here

I spoke with each of the Frontrunners about Church Street, the main drag in the gay village. I asked each of them to discuss how this street shaped their experiences in the Village. As is evident from the first grouping of narratives Church Street does hold a special resonance for many Frontrunners and has, for the most part, positively framed their experience of the ghetto. The remaining narratives offer a more complicated reading of the social space and reveal that Church Street is also a place of displacement and disappointment. Several of these narratives are included as they provide a useful starting place for investigating the abstract space of the Village.

Cathy: *What are some of the things that happen in Church Street that make it such an important connection for you?*

Ramona: *A lot of different things actually. The bars, restaurants, shopping, hanging out on a nice day, just being here, hanging out in the park. Just being that close to so many other gay people. I don't know how anyone could not love this.*

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Michael: *I don't know what I would do if I didn't live in the Village... if I didn't have Frontrunners to run with every Saturday morning, if I didn't have a gay gym to work out in... I left the gay gym for a while and worked out at the Y. The Y in Toronto is about as gay-friendly as you can get but it is not the same.*

Actually I think I am more aware of not being in the Village.

Cathy: *What do you mean by that?*

Michael: *Well I am definitely aware of being outside of the Village. Like if I were out with a couple of people from the group [Frontrunners] who are holding hands or something you'd get noticed. You are aware of the fact that you are more visible... whereas here you are generally invisible. I'm keenly aware and I've explained to my straight friends that it really is a little sanctuary down here. But then the most bashing and violence against gay people happens in this area as well. People tend to stay outside on the periphery and wait for people to wander out of it. So I am aware that Church Street is a unique place.*

Ethan: *I really like that it is identified as a gay and lesbian area. Sometimes if I haven't had a lot to do, or haven't been out to the bars, or I don't know, if I just haven't been on Church Street for a while, it is kind of nice to just go down on Saturday afternoon and go shopping or go through the Starbucks or something. Just to be in your own community kind of thing. I definitely feel more comfortable at Church Street. I don't live there now but I lived at Church and Charles for four years ... so I was on Church Street everyday. I think I needed to do just that.*

Cathy: *Why did you think you needed that?*

Ethan: *Well, I was sort of coming ...well not coming to terms with being gay, but this is who I am and I was ready to identify myself as gay and when people knew* *that was where I lived I think they made the assumption that I was gay. Plus I was right there, it was my ...it was my community, and so I wanted to be a part of it. I had some hesitation about moving into the area. I needed to move and I looked for an apartment for two months and this place came up so I took it. I was there for four years and I was happy to be there.*

Would I want to go back there now? No, I don't think so. I am happy to live where I live now and there are a number of gay and lesbian people in the neighborhood. I think it is good that we are integrated into the whole community rather than being separated, but it is nice to have that separate place too. Where if you are walking down the street with someone ...with a guy and you want to hold his hand, you do. I think living near Church Street for that time, gave me more confidence in being gay. Like I wouldn't hesitate to be out in front and kiss a friend goodbye, a male friend, on the lips. I haven't come out to my neighbors but I wouldn't hide the fact that I was gay. I think living near Church Street gave me that confidence.

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Although these first three narratives pay very little attention to spatial differentiation along class, race and gender lines, they begin to outline the social importance of Church Street. Ramona highlights Church Street as a space designed for consumption and reinforces the notion that spaces are commodified regardless of their orientation (Brown 2000). For her, it is a place where banal and everyday pleasures are derived from looking, consuming, and making contact with other gays and lesbians. Ethan begins to outline the social importance of the visual as he discusses that Church Street is "his community" as it enabled him to begin to identify as a gay man in the public sphere. His narrative speaks to the ways in which the street can be an active medium through which social identities are created and contested. Although he is no longer interested in living in the ghetto, he acknowledges that his own spatial practices and representation of a gay sexual identity continue to be visible in particular spaces outside of Church Street. Without living on Church Street he does not think he would have the confidence to destabilize the assumed heteronormativity of urban space with the simple gesture of a kiss.

From Michael's perspective, life within the ghetto is also free from the implicit homophobia of heterosexually coded spaces. For example, the gym where he trains regularly (the World Gym) is a fixture in the Village for many gay men. Other local, gay-friendly gyms like the YMCA are not as appealing to Michael as they are not exclusively for the gay male market. For Michael, and several other runners, it is important to spend their leisure time in spaces produced almost exclusively for gay men.

The second point I want to draw out from Michael's narrative is the way he describes the Village as a space of refuge or in his words as a "sanctuary" where he feels *invisible*. I find his use of the term *invisibility* interesting, as I would argue that a critical aspect of sexual identity within Church Street is played out through visuality. However, his comments about feeling invisible in the Village do make sense in that they highlight the displacement of the heterosexual male gaze that regulates the public sphere. By this I mean that the presence of gay men in the village is so ordinary, so taken-for-granted that it becomes invisible. In addition, men who have sex with men often rely on invisibility and anonymity in sexualized spaces whether inside or outside of the ghetto. Outside of the gay village, Michael is aware that same-sex expressions of intimacy, such as holding hands, make one visible and therefore vulnerable. Within the 'sanctuary' of the Village, he becomes invisible to the homophobic gaze and can maximize his bodily display when he occupies public space. His spatial practice changes as he openly exchanges looks, gazes, phone numbers and body fluids in gyms, cafes and bathhouses. However, as streets are very visible features of maps, Church Street remains a space clearly marked as "the gay village". There remains the ever-present threat of homophobic street violence as a result of public visibility. This begins to reveal Church Street as a site of both desire and dread.

Toronto Police Issue Warning
(February 28, 2002) Toronto Police issued an alert to the gay community, after receiving reports a gang of teens was targeting young gay men in the Village.

PC Duncan Aldridge said that one or two youths will approach a man in the Church and Wellesley area and ask if he wants to buy drugs or sex. If he says yes, he is lured to an alley where the rest of the gang is waiting. Aldridge said he believes the thieves have netted thousands of dollars. But, not a single victim has reported a crime to police. The officer said police received the information from business owners in the area who were told by their customers of the attacks.

(Siu 2002)

David Bell and Jon Binnie (1998) discuss how city streets have long been framed as an iconic space in the queer sexual imaginary. However, as these narratives reveal, it is not as if following the queer yellow brick road into the gay village transports one into a completely different and more progressive space. Although it does provide a more rewarding spatial experience for some, the gay village remains a space of abstraction. Diane Chisholm's (1999) critique of gay social space begins to outline some of these contradictions. Focusing on the development of the gay bathhouse, Chisholm argues that queer spaces are comprised of both the goals of commodity capitalism as well as notions of resistance and community. Lefebvre's concept of abstract space allows us to explore how such contradictions dialectically reside within the streets of the gay village. The richness of the dialectical approach allows multiple meanings and often contradictory experiences to surface and enables a more complex, contextually sensitive understanding of social space .

The next two narratives begin to unpack the contested space of the gay village. In particular, these selections further challenge the understanding that public spaces are universally accessible to a civic public.

Cathy: *Let me ask you a few questions about Church Street. What does the gay village mean to you as a place?*

Diane: *Mostly I love it. I still feel like its mostly occupied by men ... and I don't like when I read in the papers that Kyle Ray [a gay alderman in Toronto] and* *other people talk about it as "boyztown" or "gaytown" because partly he is right and I don't like that. It does seem like boyztown. But I do like Pride week where you see just as many women as you do men. Otherwise there is not a lot of really great spaces for women, except for Slack Alice or Tango's. It's like you can go anywhere and you find mostly men and you can go to Tango's and you'll find mostly women. But at Slack Alice there really is such a nice mix of people. But you know I love this area just because you get that feeling like you are coming into your own neighborhood.*

Colleen: *My experience of Church Street. Well I suppose... I've never really felt a part of Church Street. You know I feel a part of it on Pride. And I mean I've never wanted to live in the ghetto. And I in a lot of ways I don't really feel like I have a place or a even reason to be here. And so in a sense Frontrunners gives me a reason to come here. So I like that actually.. yeah I like that. It is a tie to the community.*

Otherwise I never have reason to come here. I would have loved to come to that meeting the other night [the meeting at the 519 Community Centre in response to the police raid on the women's bathhouse]. I mean I heard about the meeting at the 519 after the meeting had already happened. Since then I have been reading everything I can get my hands on about the bathhouse but ... It is difficult to stay connected to what's happening here. Especially if you're not out in the bars ...and that is not always what I want to be doing. So I mean I guess in some ways

Church Street is a bit one-dimensional for me. You know its about going to bars... and I like my association with the Frontrunners because it gives it another dimension. And I guess I like the idea of meeting other women for whom sport is important.

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Church Street is a strangely contradictory place; it is a site through which power relations and systems of domination can be both maintained and resisted. Diane and Colleen both allude to the dominant relations of production within Church Street that have relentlessly and tirelessly appropriated the gay ghetto for white, gay middle class living. Although Diane dislikes the term "Boyztown", it remains a fitting descriptor of the space. While there are some transgendered and lesbians who live and spend a significant amount of their leisure time in the Village, the socioeconomic profile of the neighborhood makes it most accessible to men.

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Lefebvre's writing on the production of space, the everyday, contemporary urbanism and geographies of exclusion resonate with me in several ways. Living in and visiting Toronto, I was a 'user' of space on Church Street in ways that were both spectacular and prosaic. Marching to police headquarters with hundreds of people to protest the raids at the women's bathhouse punctuated the ways in which space is the medium for social control. However, I found that it was the simple, daily interactions which more deeply shaped my experience of the street and which revealed more about socially constructed spaces and spatial ways of knowing. One such instance sticks out in my memory. I was walking with a friend to a restaurant

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Seeing and being seen in Boyztown

Ocularcentrism emerges within abstract space and comes to dominate in capitalist spatializations (Lefebvre 1991; Shields 1999). Take for example, the way Church Street is described on the 'Gay Toronto Tour' page of a Canadian daily online newspaper:

> You'll know you're in the Village when you see all the rainbow flags and the rainbow banners hanging from light standards. Of course, the other sign is all the hot guys on the street. The warm weather brings them out. And, of course, they have to show off those gym bodies they've been working on all winter (www.gay365.com).

The gay village reflects an intense preoccupation with gay masculinity and self-presentation. In a chapter aptly titled, "Having Something to Wear: The Landscape of Identity on Christopher Street", James Polchin discusses the ways in which the claiming of a street by gay men involves the projection of an identity within the public space of urban culture. He explains that the "claiming of an urban space, the formation of a community, provides a means for creating a vision of identity, a vision that, like most identities … relies on commercial culture" (1997:383).

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on the perimeter of Church Street, called Hair of the Dog. As usual, part of our conversation involved work and this project in particular. As we walked along, there were two men walking ahead of us holding hands. A truck passed by the pair and the driver yelled out a homophobic slur. For me that 'moment' epitomized how fragile queer space is regardless of socio-spatial boundaries. Space remains something that is continually struggled over. It also highlighted that the body remains a site of crucial political contest and that as subjects we have to continually struggle, maintain and reproduce its own conditions of existence.

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Hockey Mayhem: The root of our intimidation
The disturbance usually begins at 7:00 p.m. It is about this time that game attendees roll into the city hoping to avoid parking problems, and those feared linups at the front gate. With an hour to kill before the puck is dropped for the opening face-off, some choose to cruise up Church Street, hoping to get a glimpse of some important monument such as the CN Tower, or the SkyDome. Most are not even aware that the Maple Leaf Gardens lies within the gay community...

The everlasting presence of the butch, macho straight males at Leafs games, along with the middle and upper class families, put gays and lesbians in one of two positions. Either they put them on their heels, making it uncomfortable to be themselves, or send them into hibernation, into the bars and coffee shops where they cannot be openly harassed

(Murmitzer 1997)

(N.B. Since 1999 the Toronto Maple Leafs have moved venues and now play at the Air Canada Centre. The Air Canada Centre is located between Union Station and the Gardiner Expressway moving the Leafs out of the Village. The Centre is called Toronto's Theatre of Sport and Entertainment and is also home to Toronto's NBA team the Raptors.)

As Brown (2000) points out public spaces, whether heterosexual or 'queer', are produced for the simulation and satisfaction of desire as well as for profit. The aesthetic that visually dominates the vista of Church Street is maintained through goods and images of eroticized, masculinized male bodies. Lefebvre explains that within abstract spaces the logic of visualization works in such a way that the bodies of 'users' become images, signs and symbols. In his words:

> these bodies are transported out of themselves, transferred and emptied out, as it were, via the eyes: every kind of appeal, incitement and seduction is mobilized to tempt them with doubles of themselves in prettified, smiling and happy poses; and this campaign to void them succeeds exactly to the same degree that the images proposed correspond to 'needs' that those same images have helped fashion" (1991:98).

Within the parcellized space of Church Street numerous venues cater specifically to gay middle class shopping and entertainment. Most clothing stores like Out on the Street and Priape cater to active gay consumers. Both shops sells men's clothing in the front of the shop and sex toys at the back. These and the other storefronts that dominate the street construct variations of gay sexual aesthetics. Some women, of course, do shop there and buy 'unisex' clothing as well as sex toys but it is a space clearly fashioned for gay men[11]. In addition the vast majority of bars on Church Street cater to gay men and help to secure the street as a gendered public space. As Diane mentioned, there are only two bars where one can find a strong lesbian presence. The other bars, for example, Stables/The Barns which is a three story men's dance club with a leather shop; Crews; Woody's and Sailor; and the Black Eagle leather bar are primarily social spaces for men. While Church Street does resonate as an important space for many lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people; Colleen and Diane highlight the extent to which gay male sexuality defines the street.

> The existence of a gay bar -- anywhere in this city -- is a matter of supreme social, economic and political importance. It matters both where they are and where they aren't.
>
> Why? Because queer sexual/romantic activity is simply not tolerated in certain parts of this city. For queers, bars and bathhouses aren't just places to find sex -- they're places where we can hunt, flirt and revel in our culture without being threatened, harassed or beaten up.
>
> Sky Gilbert (2000)

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[11] There are other commercial spaces in the city that oriented more specifically to women, such as the Toronto Women's Book Store, and Come As You Are. However these stores are located outside of the gay village.

In many respects the visual formant of the street works to establish who has rights to what kinds of spaces and who is appropriate where. Lefebvre, working within heterosexist parameters, only highlights the visual fragmentation of the female body. Similarly, Brown (2000)[12] argues that "Lefebvre's remarks on the body and fragmentation seem out of place in discussions of the production of gay space" (2000:83). While this may hold true with closeted sexual relations I would argue that fragmentation is a central strategy operating within the streets of the gay village. There is a preponderance of advertisements and visual texts where male bodies are fragmented. Photos of men's chests, buttocks and thighs work in an explicitly visual regime to produce a sexualized space linked to capitalist social relations where gay bodies are produced as commodities.

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[12] Similarly, Brown's work on the production of the closet does not examine how gay bodies are fragmented. Like Lefebvre he also claims that "we can see how capitalism and heterosexuality intertwine to fragment the body in abstract space so that it becomes objectified and commodified" (2000:85).

Panty Picket Protest

From the Toronto Women's Bath House Committee

Friday, October 24, 2000

Early in the morning of September 15th the Pussy Palace was raided by five male officers from the Toronto Police Services. The Toronto Women's Bath House Organizing Committee was notified by the police on October 6th that 2 members of the committee will be charged with Liquor License Act violations, arising from the Pussy Palace Women's Bath House.

The Women's Bath House committee and many individuals in the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities are outraged by this action. This is the latest incident in the Toronto police forces' ongoing campaign of targeted policing and harassment of marginalized communities in Toronto.

Help us send a clear message to the POLICE DEPARTMENT that the community is FURIOUS that charges have been laid.

BRING YOUR OUTRAGE AND FURY!
BRING your PANTIES, LINGERIE, BOXERS and BRIEFS!

Bring picket signs expressing your OUTRAGE that another MARGINALIZED COMMUNITY is being targeted by POLICE HARASSMENT

Organized by: Toronto Women's Bathhouse Committee.

(http://www.pussypalacetoronto.com/raid/index.html)

Representations of space, encountered through images and signs, shape how we conceive Church Street. However, Lefebvre warns visual epistemologies, which are central to the production of abstract space, operate by appearing innocent and ahistorical. Therefore it is important not to 'overlook' the ways in which social and spatial relations are produced. For example, there are also many "invisible" bodies on Church Street. Bodies that are either discounted on the street or which are absent all together. Yet, these displacements and absences largely remain hidden and concealed within abstract space.

The bodies that occupy the streets of the Village are by no means uniformly affluent. There are numerous transient and low-income men and women who congregate in the Village. Among those who inhabit, yet are excluded, from the social space of the streets are street youth, most of whom are fleeing domestic violence, neglect or physical and sexual abuse. It is now recognized that the street youth population has an over-representation of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth. The Shout Clinic in Toronto estimates that there are approximately 12,000 homeless young people on the city streets, forty percent of whom are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered (Daly 1998). It would be a mistake to assume that the streets of the Village frame experience in any one way. For example, homeless youth often gather to panhandle and hustle on the infamous 'Steps' of the Second Cup. This sexualized space, embodied with all sorts of erotic meanings for gay men, has starkly different meanings for street youth where life on Church Street is more about survival than style.

There are multiple spatialities on Church Street which reflect the varied social location of its occupants. Queer youth have a very different relation to financial and cultural capital and often feel excluded from Church Street. Their invisibility and inability to fix identity in place – literally and metaphorically-within the cartography of the Village challenges the myth of an 'imagined community', a conceived space of belonging (Anderson 1991). However, as Lefevbre (1991) outlines, contradictions remain and 'moments' of difference survive within the everyday. There are a number of counterspaces, which evince a desire for a better, more inclusive streetscape. For example, there are a few organizations that work to construct new social spaces within the Village for queer youth. Organizations such as SOY (Supporting Our Youth), a community development project, was initiated to create social spaces for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered youth. Interestingly SOY appears to disrupt the primacy of Whiteness and has several initiatives and programs for youth of color and Immigrant populations. For example, within SOY there is a Newcomers Immigrant Group and a Black Queer Youth Initiative whose mandate is to produce "safe space for Black, Multiracial, African/Caribbean youth under 29 who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual and questioning". In addition, in January 2001, the 519 Community Centre, located on Church Street, launched Canada's first trans-youth community initiative. The program called "Trans · Youth · Toronto!" (T · Y · T) is a drop-in site for transsexual and transgendered youth aged 26 and under. These groups map some of the streets internal contradictions and develop in response to entrenched systems of power in order to provide a more rewarding spatial experience for queer youth.

Traces of Racialized Spaces

While Church Street is predominantly white, the city of Toronto is not. Before beginning to examine the racial geography of Church Street, it is important to explore the role of race in the production of space within the city itself. Lefebvre's notion of abstract space highlights how certain groups come to dominate public space. The following two examples highlight the production of exclusionary, abstract spaces that are simultaneously homogeneous and fragmented, unified and fractured. Each example considers the power of abstract space to absorb or to eliminate racial differences (Lefebvre 1991). They also raise an important point vis-avis Lefebvre's work that links the representation of cities and the dialectical relationship between identity and urban space (McCann 1999).

The first example draws on the strategic marking of the city as a large urban centre that is widely considered safe, clean, and racially diverse. Toronto is one of the largest cities in North America with a population in the Greater Toronto Area at well over four million. The city is often highlighted as a "global village", a place where diversity is celebrated. The Toronto Board of Trade estimates that in the year 2010, the population of visible minorities will be a majority, representing 54 per cent of the population of Toronto (City of Toronto 2002). Painting Toronto as an idyllic city, Mayor Mel Lastman announced during his 1998 speech at the G-8 Summit of the Cities that, "Toronto has more foreign-born people than any other city in the world. That diversity gives us strong vibrant multicultural communities and neighborhoods. You can come to Toronto and visit the world". The image of Toronto as the consummate example of Canadian multiculturalism is widespread, particularly since the United Nations has called the city the "most ethnically diverse city in the world". These claims suggest that the city of Toronto is a well-integrated racial community devoid of any significant racial inequalities or systemic racism.

Lefebvre (1991) maintains that abstract space is fundamentally contradictory because it can only appear homogenous by accentuating and absorbing difference. He also explains that abstract space assigns special status to particular places within the city by arranging them hierarchically and stipulating exclusion for some and integration for others. Toronto's racial diversity is often used to highlight it as a "world class city" in order to secure a higher international profile. As social activist Jan Borowy, from the Bread Not Circuses Coalition has noted, Toronto's racial diversity was used as a commodity to support the 2008 Olympic Bid. The Organizing committee repeatedly showcased the city's multicultural diversity within the Olympic Bid. However, the Bread Not Circuses Coalition disrupts this notion of diversity by highlighting the "economic apartheid" that exists for the majority of people of color in the city. Citing data from the city-funded report, "Ethno-Racial Inequality in the City of Toronto", Borowy explains that over 40 per cent of families in most non-white communities live below the poverty line. In some communities the number of women and children living in poverty is 70 per cent. Unemployment rates in some communities are over 50 per cent compared to 7 per cent for those of European origin. In addition to the Bread Not Circuses Coalition, there are several other sources, such as the 2000 Orenstein Report, which highlight long standing social and economic inequalities that contribute to racialized geographies within the city.

The second example highlights the powerful pressure to homogenize and absorb differences within the city. The University of Toronto, one of Canada's 'premier' universities, offers a number of academic units which are *race-based* (i.e, Aboriginal Studies, African Studies Programme, Asia Pacific Studies, Equity Studies, and the Caribbean Studies Program to name a few). The very existence of these programs highlights profound contradictions inherent in abstract space. These programs shatter the corpus of colonial epistemologies and highlight the social, spatial and cultural inequities facing racial minorities in Canada. Yet, these programs are housed within a University where the ethno-racial composition of the faculty is overwhelmingly homogenous (read white). Overall, the faculty population, which in 2000 was reported to be 1710, only 8.7 per cent of faculty belong to a visible minority (Shah 2000). In 2000, it was estimated that only 15 per cent of new faculty recruits were people of color (Shah 2000). Lefebvre's account of the abstraction of space brings to the fore the continuing processes of homogenization where racial differences are highlighted only to be absorbed or 'crushed'. The University of Toronto is not unique in this regard, as most universities 'contain' race within specific disciplinary areas, while at the same time maintaining a veneer of unity and homogeneity. These two examples of racial geographies within the city provide some context for thinking through the abstract space of Church Street.

Sean: *I moved to Toronto fairly recently... for me its kind of a double edged thing. Certainly if you don't have it [Church Street] around you miss those connections. On the other hand it can also become very insulated. Like it's the same people all the time and sometimes I get tired of the gay world. You know you don't want to be part of it all the time. That's one of the reasons I don't live close to Church Street.*

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Brad: *Ahhh It is looking a little tired these days. I wouldn't choose to live there. Do I enjoy visiting there on Saturday morning? Yes. Do I spend a lot of time in the Church village? No. Do I have friends there? Yeah. To be quite honest, I tend not to like homogeneous groups of any kind and I think that life is rich and diverse and colorful. While it is important for me to have a place that I know is there and I have friends that come in from out of town and going and having dinner at Spinello's or where ever on Church Street is something that they will really want to do and that is cool, so we will go and do that.*

I am more interested in being around a wider mix of folks. I am out but I am certainly not militant. I don't think that I have to be surrounded by gay folk but I have friends that almost entirely their social life is gay. They talk gay, they spend all of their time with gay folks, as a matter of fact, they make an intentional effort not to mix with whomever else and I find that really tiring. So my life is much more about that than being identified with Church and Wellesley. I mean I don't spend a whole lot of time there. I hope I don't sound self-righteous, because that is not my intent. I know I fit in a very different place than a chunk of folks in the running club.

Cathy: *In talking to women I find that they tend to be more critical of Church Street but they also want some kind of association with it.... and some of the men that live there don't necessarily see many political issues at all.*

Brad: *I think unfortunately the Village shelters people and there is a whole bar life, and I don't really want to say anything disparaging about that either. I think absolutely when you are coming out it is an important place. But it is also limiting and a rather narrow place.*

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Ethan: *Church Street, when you look around it, really isn't a true reflection of what our population is. Just like the subway. I am always a minority on the subway, but when I go down to Church Street I am going to be in the majority.*

Cathy: *Why do you think it is like that?*

Ethan: *Church Street is based on commerce, so people with money are going to be able to shop there and spend money there, with disposable income and so that would be why there is more white men. Because my guess is that minorities would be in lower paying jobs and wouldn't have the income.*

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Andy: *I really see Church Street as not reflecting the racial diversity of Toronto for whatever reason... Certainly with the size of the various [racial] communities in the city you think that there would be a more diverse makeup. ...I don't think they are any less affluent than the population at large. It is a very affluent city and that affluence is fairly evenly distributed for the most part. I mean I realize there are inequities like single mothers and that type of thing.*

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What features prominently in these narratives is the overwhelming homogeneity of Church Street. Toronto's gay village is one of the largest in the world and the city itself is thought to have one of the world's largest gay populations. Yet, whiteness[13] is taken-for-granted on the streets of the gay village. While several runners discuss the lack of diversity on Church Street, race was only directly mentioned in two (Ethan and Andy's) narratives. It is not surprising that both of these narratives turn to economic considerations rather than conceiving that there is racism *within* the queer community. During my interviews with the Frontrunners I often found that gay men who lived in the ghetto failed to see whiteness as profoundly constitutive of the very existence of Church Street. In particular, they failed to see the Village as the endproduct or byproduct of hierarchical and unequal relationships that secure the ghetto as an exclusionary space for white, middle-class males. As whiteness affords privileges that often go unacknowledged, gay men like Andy, who live in the Village, have a small measure of electoral and institutional power garnered through neighborhood control that largely benefits other middle-class, gay white men (Davis 1995). This well-ordered landscape necessitates both the exclusion of those outsiders who do not fit in this intimate space and the elision of the ongoing social and economic problems that keep certain bodies on the outside.

As I have outlined in previous chapters, race is an inherently spatial process. This means that in addition to its social and cultural manifestations, race actively shapes and is shaped by the production of space. However, as geographer

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[13] Whiteness, bell hooks explains "is a concept underlying racism, colonization and cultural imperialism" (1990:166).

Linda Peake (1993) suggests postmodern discourse, while explicitly encouraging understandings of differences, often does not do an effective job of addressing the spatialization of race and sexuality. Lefebvre's analysis can be brought to bear on the racial and sexual coding of the production and maintenance of abstract space. By giving centrality to the *body* in the understanding of the relationship between the spatial triad (spatial practices, representations of space and spaces of representation) Lefebvre's theoretical approach can be used to address differences in racial and sexual identities and the urban spaces in which those identities exist (Brown 2000; McCann 1999).

As Sherene Razack (2002a) illustrates in her book Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society, we are plagued by an insufficient body of work on how race operates in Canada. In a recent interview, Razack (2002b) discusses the national myth, which claims that the original citizens of Canada are Europeans and that everyone else is a welcomed addition to an already existing landscape. I would argue that a version of this myth is also played out on the streets of the gay village. There seems to be an understanding that the ghetto is largely produced for white men but that its streetscapes are open to any gay and lesbian person regardless of color. Yet, a large number of Toronto's gay and lesbian population do not feel a part of Church Street. In Xtra!, "Toronto's gay and lesbian biweekly" tabloid Debbie Douglas, a Caribbean born black Canadian and civil rights activist explains that "the gay community puts forward an image of being white and middle class" (Tefler 1999:19). Poet Norman Kester echoed this sentiment in an interview published in FAB, Toronto's self-proclaimed 'gay scene magazine'. Kester was asked if it was easier for the new generation of young black ‘queers’ in the city. Part of his reply was “I think ... they're still looking for a place to belong” (1999: 19). His response reaffirms how vulnerable non-white queer bodies are to marginalisation *within* the abstract space of predominately white gay communities.

Running Backwards: Etiologies of spaces and movements

This chapter has examined public space and its relationship to identity formation within the streetscapes of the gay village. The focus has largely centred on the ways in which the Village has become normalized as a space of consumption and the profound implications for both social identity and social control within this space. Much of this chapter worked at unmapping what remains concealed within the abstract space of the gay village. In the last chapter of this project, I retrace steps taken in both chapters four and five in order to examine dialectical conceptualizations which emphasis temporary and unstable articulations of resistance within the everyday. Specifically, I examine the importance of the body as a site of action, agency and empowerment. To review, Lefebvre suggests that individual bodies produce “counterspaces” through the appropriation of space and the exercise of the ability to invent new forms of space (Stewart 1995). In the remaining chapter I examine the underpinnings of ‘moments’ of difference which survive in the everyday all the while understanding that abstract space cannot be completely evacuated.

Media Advisory:
Historic Gay Rights Court Decision: All charges against Women's Bathhouse organizers dismissed
From the Toronto Women's Bathhouse Committee

Toronto – On Thursday January 31, 2002, all charges against members of the Toronto Women's Bathhouse committee were dismissed by Justice Peter Hryn. Frank Addario, counsel for two women argued that Toronto Police Services (TPS) violated his clients' rights under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms when they raided the bathhouse event in September 2000. On the night of the event, five male plainclothes police officers searched the women's bathhouse premises for more than 1.5 hours.
In his decision Justice Hryn stated that:

- The organizers and the patrons of the event had a reasonable expectation of privacy vis a vis men. He was very critical of the failure to look for and use female officers.
- The actions of the police were analogous to a strip search and, he recognized that strip searches were humiliating, degrading and devastating particularly for women and minorities. The judge preferred the patrons' testimony about the impact of the men's presence over that of the officers, and likened the evidence given by patrons to that of women who had experienced strip searches.
- The breach of charter rights was very serious. It was flagrant and outrageous. The charter violations would shock the conscience of the public. The police actions contradict fundamental notions of justice, fair play and decency and were patently unreasonable.
- Furthermore, the police actions displayed a blatant disregard for the qualities of humaneness which are shared by the Canadian public.
  And finally that the actions of the police "Brings the administration of justice into disrepute."

In response to the Committee's massive legal bills, a group of community supporters have prepared a fundraising event in late March. "Cat Fight" will be held on Tuesday March 26 at Byzantium, a Church Street restaurant located in the heart of Toronto's gay village. "Gays and lesbians have endured a long and painful history of police intervention in their lives," says Ruthann Tucker, a community supporter. "In every instance, we've had to win our right to live on our own terms," said Tucker.

(http://www.pussypalacetoronto.com/info/index.html)

Chapter 6

Unmapping Openings and Conclusions

> Our resistance to homophobic culture is a relentless demand for presence, an occupation of space which we have colonized in the name of a configuration of desires we call 'lesbian'. The more reflective we can become about these tactics…the more effective becomes our rhetoric of resistance
>
> Sally Munt in Heroic Desire (1998:6).

> The right to the city, complemented by the right to difference and the right to information, should modify, concretize and make more practical the rights of the citizen as an urban dweller (citadin) and user of multiple services. It would affirm, on the one hand, the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in the urban area; it would also cover the right to the use of the centre, a privileged place, instead of being dispersed and stuck into ghettos (for workers, immigrants, the 'marginal' and even for the 'privileged')
>
> Henri Lefebvre in Writings on Cities (1997:34).

This dissertation began with a quest for alternatives. Specifically it opened to unmap and explore different ways of thinking about social spaces, sexual minorities, notions of resistance, and the Toronto Frontrunners running club. In this final chapter, I want to conclude by remaining open to further dialectical movements. Pulling out various strands from earlier chapters, I elaborate on some of Lefebvre's insights on the relationship between the body and space. In particular, Lefebvre (1991) argues that Western philosophy has largely abandoned and denied the body. He claims that "any revolutionary 'project' today, whether utopian or realistic, must, if it is to avoid hopeless banality, make the reappropriation of the body, in association with the reappropriation of space, into a non-negotiable part of its agenda" (1991:166-7). With this in mind, I continue to explore the movement of bodies through streetscapes and their mutual constitution in order to blur conventional notions of resistance.

Starting with the urban as the everyday and the lived, Lefebvre creatively explores space as medium of both compliance and resistance (Sheilds 1999). In particular he cites the city as a place that supports relationships of dependence, domination, exclusion and exploitation. He explains (1985:110),

> [t]o think about the city is to hold and maintain its conflictual aspects: constraints and possibilities, peacefulness and violence, meetings and solitude, gatherings and separation, the trivial and the poetic, brutal functionalism and surprising improvisation (in Kofman & Lebas 1997:53).

For Lefebvre the urban reveals the contradictions of society. While he believes in the possibility of a new urbanism, he acknowledges that social change does not result from spontaneous action but from slow changes in everyday life.

Through the reassertion of space in social theory, Lefebvre has created an opportunity to develop innovative insights into contemporary social, economic, and political practices. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas explain that what Lefebvre encourages us to do is to "recognize the tensions between unity and difference as an integral movement of dialectical materialism" (Kofman and Lebas 1997:35). In the last chapter of The Production of Space, "Openings and Conclusions", Lefebvre writes:

> This book has been informed from beginning to end by a *project*, though this may have at times been discernible only by reading between the lines. I refer to the project of a different society, a different mode of production, where social practice would be governed by different conceptual determinations (1991:419).

Lefebvre, like feminists, Marxists, and postcolonial critics, holds the belief that it is possible to make the world in which we live a better place. By understanding the ways in which space is produced, Lefebvre proposes the possibility of generating a new spatialization, a more equitable world, out of the contradictions of contemporary spaces (Shields 1999).

To think about such alternatives and possibilities, Lefebvre argues that we need utopias. As a result his writings are injected with the search for spaces that do not yet exist (Kofman & Lebas 1997). This dialectical utopianism, or what Lefebvre himself refers to as the 'impossible-possible', resonates deeply in social movements committed to antiracism, antisexism and other equity based commitments. For Lefebvre the 'impossible-possible' is a dialectical notion where, in order to obtain the least amount of change, one has to think and demand the most. This demand for change drives contemporary social movements such as the civil rights, the lesbian and gay movement, and radical feminism.

For example, cultural critics, such as Cornel West (1994) and James Baldwin (1963), rely on utopias as the basis for action. In Race Matters, Cornel West highlights the utopic visions which sustained the political struggles of Malcom X, Martin Luther King, Jr., Ella Baker, and Fannie Lou Hamer. He also writes in the epilogue that "[i]n these downbeat times, we need as much hope and courage as we do vision and analysis… even as we acknowledge the weighty forces of racism, patriarchy, economic inequality, homophobia, and ecological abuse on our necks" (1994:159). The following passage from James Baldwin's, The Fire Next Time, also reminds me of Lefebvre's notion of the 'impossible-possible'. Baldwin (1963:118) writes, "For the sake of one's own children, in order to minimize the bill they must pay, one must be careful not to take refuge in any delusion – and the value placed on the color of the skin is always and everywhere and forever a delusion. *I know that what I am asking is impossible. But in our time, as in every time, the impossible is the least that one can demand*" (emphasis added).

A recent essay by Robin Kelley, a professor of history and Africana Studies as New York University, highlights the ways in which hope, the imagination and the struggle for possibilities that lie beyond people's actual lives drive transformative political engagements. Echoing Lefebvre's 'impossible-possible' Kelley (2002:B7)[1] writes,

> Unfortunately, too often our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they 'succeeded' in realizing their visions rather than on the merits or power of the visions themselves. By such a measure, virtually every radical movement failed because the basic power relations it sought to change remain pretty much intact. And yet it is precisely those alternative visions and dreams that inspire new generations to continue to struggle for change.

Similarly, Lefebvre acknowledges the difficulties of initiating sweeping social change, particularly as our lives are so thoroughly rooted in capitalist practice. However, far from being an ethereal philosopher, Lefebvre focuses on the 'ordinary' and locates social, political and economic struggles within the everyday. As a result his work clearly outlines some of the ways that the abstract forces of domination and resistance become tangible.

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[1] This excerpt is from an article adapted from his Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination published by Beacon Press 2002.

The Resistant Quality of Bodies

Lefebvre argues that the marginalized and excluded can develop concrete alternatives to the present spatial system. In other words, resistance begins from the body, with its corporeal ability to produce space (Stewart 1995). This project has examined the ways in which members of the Toronto Frontrunners create an alternative space. It also reveals the ways in which counterspaces are constantly in danger of replicating the structures of the dominant. In this final segment I want to take one last detour in order to focus on the importance of 'moments' within the local spatialization of the Toronto Frontrunners.

In The Production of Space Lefebvre considers the production of 'spaces of leisure' as "free zones of escape, denial, resistance through folly and unproductiveness" (Shields 1999:184). As 'non-work' spaces, spaces of leisure are separated from the rationalized spaces of production. Yet, Lefebvre considers leisure spaces contradictory in that they appear to transcend the constraints imposed by neocapitalism and move beyond spaces of consumption. He explains that "all this seemingly non-productive expense is planned with the greatest care: centralized, organized, hierarchized, symbolized and programmed to the *n*th degree" (1991:59). Leisure, he claims, is no real escape from the alienation of everyday life. There is an organized passivity to leisure as it is highly structured and manipulated rather than the site of genuine dis-alienation (Gardiner 2000).

Recalling that within abstract space is the disappearance of the qualitative, Lefebvre outlines the ways in which leisure spaces can be reabsorbed by the quantitative. Yet, Lefebvre also states that there are 'moments' in which people leave the *space of consumption* (locations of capital accumulation, the space of production, the market space, the space which the state controls, etc.) and move towards the *consumption of space*, what Lefebvre refers to as an unproductive form of consumption. He explains, "[t]he …quantity-quality contradiction is not grounded in a (binary) opposition but rather in a three-point interaction, in a movement from the space of consumption to the consumption of space via leisure and within the space of leisure" (1991:354).

At the same time that the social space of the Frontrunners is filled with acute contradictions marked off by power along the lines of race, class and gender, the running club remains an example of the demand for a qualitative space (or the consumption of space). Take for example the following narratives:

Cathy: *What is it like when you are actually running with this large group of gay runners through the streets… have you thought about that?*

Andy: *I love that feeling it's a feeling of power. I mean we are out there in such a large group, but even if there are only 3 or 4 of us there is that feeling of challenging the system. Absolutely. It's a great feeling. It's like taking ourselves places that were we are not supposed to actually go. I just love that sense of breaking boundaries and taking over spaces.*

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Cathy: *So you talked about this after last Saturday's run... about how it felt to actually run and move through the streets in that group. Can you tell me more about that?*

Richard: *Yeah that's my favorite part of Frontrunners. I just love it. I love the way, I just love running with a big group of queer people. I love taking over the space as a big bunch of queer people. And even in Toronto where you know in my neighborhood especially it's very safe for me as a queer person, like I am in one of the most safe places in the world probably to be an out queer person but you are still always on guard because you are just you know one queer person and you get phobed by people once in a while so you are just on your guard. But when you're out running in Toronto with 50 or 60 other queer people there's nothing that can happen to you. You're totally... I mean you can be absolutely queer any way you want and there is nothing anyone can do. So it is quite an amazing feeling.*

And I think even beyond that I mean it's hard to describe the feeling just also I guess cause our group too is a lot of guys - running with a bunch of guys is really neat too. Ahhh there is something about just going out into the ravine with a bunch of men you know and ...it's kinda like all the stuff in gym class was always so uncomfortable as a queer person I felt. And to do it again now in a queer group that is ...is like conquering that fear that you had as a kid.

These two narratives reveal the body as a site of action, agency and empowerment. I also read them as utopian impulses that emphasize the importance of 'moments'[2]. Before continuing to unpack the above narratives, I will quickly outline Lefebvre's 'Theory of Moments'. Basically, Lefebvre argues that the everyday is composed of a multiplicity of moments (love, hate, rage, surrender, frustration, poetry, etc) that puncture the 'everydayness' (the undifferentiated space of the mundane). Shields explains moments are

> those times when one recognizes or has a sudden insight into a situation or an experience beyond the merely empirical routine of some activity. A moment is a flash of the wider significance of some 'thing' or event – its relation to the whole, and by extension, our relation to totality (1999:58).

While these moments are often trivial, Lefebvre emphasizes that they are important since critiques of everyday life come from the realm of the marginal and trivial.

This concept of moments underscores the significance of counterspaces like the Toronto Frontrunners Running Club. As Andy and Richard explain the group enables them to experience a much different relationship to both their bodies and space. Andy discusses the way the Frontrunners create an overwhelming presence on the street. A similar notion of presence is discussed in David Couch's (1998) work on leisure practices in the street. Couch considers how the presence and movement of bodies that are engaged in a shared purpose can momentarily overwhelm any other image of the street. This ritual of occupation provides Andy with moments when he is aware of possibilities that challenge the limits of everyday living.

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[2] According to Kofman & Lebas (1997), Lefebvre first discussed his 'Theory of Moments' in 1925. It was later used to develop his theory of rhythmanalysis (a concept that interweaves cyclical and linear rhythms in the everyday). Very few English-speaking audiences have explored Lefebvre's theory of moments. Shields explains that Lefebvre does not take up moments in an

As several other narratives through this project have revealed, running can be explored for all the ways in which it is a useful informer of spatial knowledge and the multisensuality of the body in street space. Drawing from Lefebvre, we can take this understanding of the production and occupation of leisure spaces one step further. Lefebvre states that within areas set aside for leisure "the body regains a certain right to use, a right which is half imaginary and half real" (1991:353). In many ways I consider this the most important aspect of the social space of the Toronto Frontrunners, as it reveals the totality of possibilities contained within this 'queer' space. Individuals, such as Ethan, James and Richard, who once felt estranged and displaced from their body space have been able to engage their own bodies in ways that were previously (in a half imaginary and half real way) denied.

In the precediing excerpt Richard discusses how vulnerable he often feels as a queer person. For him part of what the running club offers is safety and a place that momentarily changes the meaning of the street. He indicates that the runs themselves are sites of imagination, self-realization, of using space on his own terms and in shared practice. Through the social space of the Frontrunners he engages in a very bodily experience of space and experiences movements and desires that once were alienating. This is a moment when the dominant

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overly individualistic or psychological manner rather he " always tries to connect personal 'moments' with social totality (1999:62).

spatialization is ruptured and there is the possibility of what Lefebvre (1991:353) calls the "reinstatement of the body's rights" to pleasure and desire.

DéjàView

This project has explored the ways in which bodies provide an important means of access to the world and enable us to move away from visual understandings of space. It also has unmapped dominant understandings of what qualifies as resistance, arguing that in late-capitalist, post-industrial spaces the boundaries of resistance are vague and fluid and surface from counterspaces where exchange value is replaced by use value. Drawing from Lefebvre, I have explored the mundane and ordinary spaces of the everyday where resistance elaborates new spatialities. However, these geographies of resistance are located within abstract spatial relations which can be disrupted, although this only ever happens in partial, particularistic and local ways creating temporary and uneven patchworks of change (Blum and Nast 1996).

The social space of the Toronto Frontrunners is filled with contradictions. It is a space which, like "lipstick traces on a cigarette" (Marcus 1989:345), leaves marks that are both definite and almost imperceptible. It is a space where possibilities and desires are opened to be expressly corporealized and spatialized, where certain power relations are confronted, while others are (re)inscribed. The importance of social spaces, like the Frontrunners, cannot be overlooked. They complicate our understandings of domination and resistance, and reveal the numerous contradictions that continue to exist within counterspaces.

The experiences of members of the Frontrunners are grounded in everyday life, in the habitual and the mundane practices, which make up the material of contemporary culture. Lefebvre's analysis of the production of social space serves as a valuable tool for understanding the contemporary cultural landscape, refocusing traditional ideas of resistance, and examining the potential in the totality of the everyday. The Toronto Frontrunners produce an alternative social space and, in doing so, the possibility for change, or at least for the momentary entry of a different possibility.

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Appendix 1

Information Letter

Research Project Title:	**Unmapping The Social Space of the Toronto Frontrunners: Lefebvre and Geographies of Resistance**
Investigator:	Cathy van Ingen, PhD. Candidate Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta
Thesis Supervisor:	Dr. Debra Shogan (780) 492-0996 Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta

The purpose of this research is to explore how running in a club with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered runners produces a specific kind of "social space". Specifically, I am interested in what types of meanings the Frontrunners holds for you. You have identified yourself as someone who might be willing to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary.

Each person will be interviewed up to three times over a three-month period. During these interviews you will be asked to describe what the Frontrunners means to you, and what it means to train and run in a gay-friendly club. These interviews will be audio taped and later transcribed. After each interview the information gained from your participation will be made available to you so that you may comment on the accuracy of the investigator's interpretation of your "data." To ensure anonymity, the tapes and their associated transcripts will be assigned a pseudonym, coded, and locked in a filing cabinet to which only the investigator has access. Normally, information is retained for a period of five years post publication, after which it is destroyed.

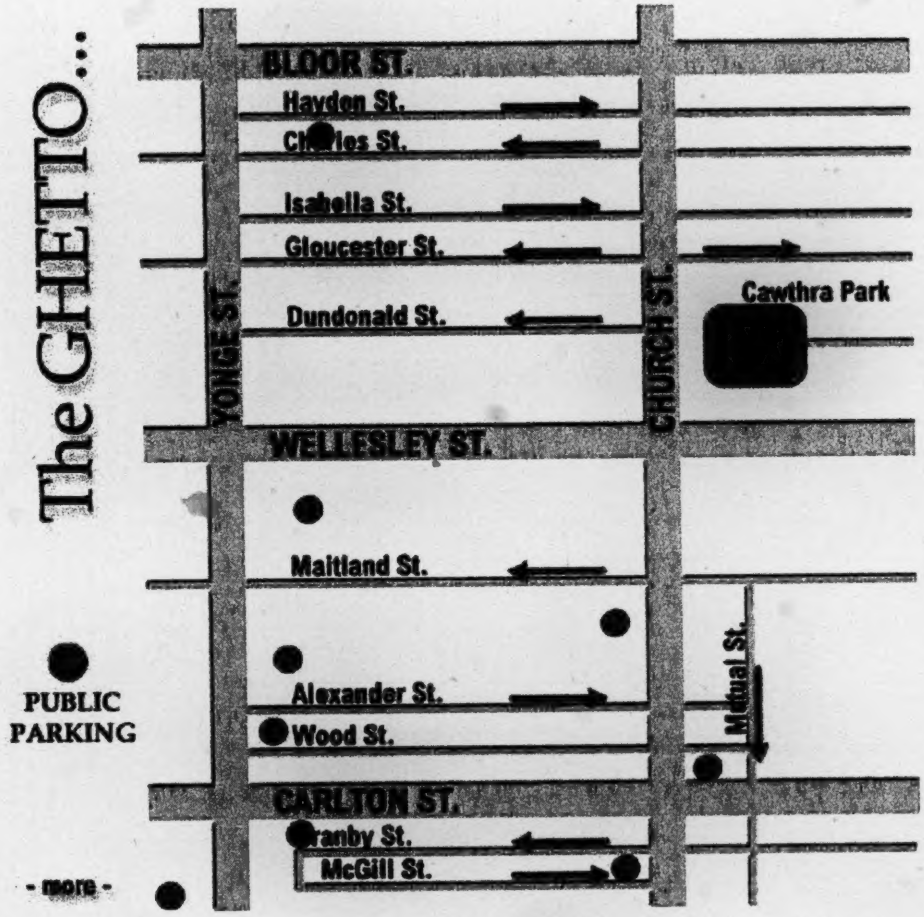
The final research project, including anonymous quotations, will be available to all participants, and will be presented as part of a Doctoral dissertation. The research findings may be published but the anonymity and confidentiality of the subjects will be ensured. The potential risks of the study are minimal, however it is possible that some participants may feel uncomfortable disclosing personal or sensitive information. At any time you can decline to continue or withdraw from the study without consequence or explanation. If you withdraw, your information will be removed from the study upon your request.

If you wish to speak with someone who is not involved with this study, please call Dr. Wendy Rodgers, Chair of the Ethics Committee at (780) 492-2677.

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study.

Appendix 2

Map of the Toronto's gay village


The GHETTO...
BLOOR ST.
Hayden St.
Charles St.
Isabella St.
Gloucester St.
Dundonald St.
Cawthra Park
YONGE ST.
CHURCH ST.
WELLESLEY ST.
Maitland St.
Mutual St.
PUBLIC PARKING
Alexander St.
Wood St.
CARLTON ST.
Granby St.
McGill St.
- more -